

the simple list

Your monthly dose of useful tidbits, timely trivia, and catchy conversation starters



17

The number of letters in *quasquicentennial*, the tongue-twisting term for a 125th anniversary.

On February 2, the town of Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, will celebrate the quasquicentennial of Groundhog Day. And the next time you feel like you're stuck in a rut—well, just think about poor Punxsutawney Phil.

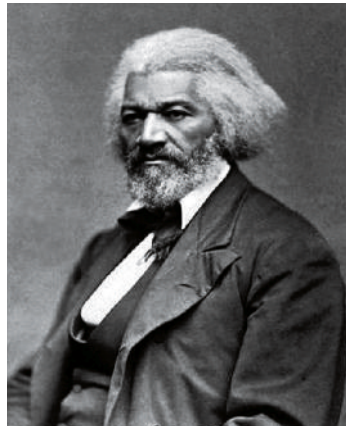
6,000+

The number of cards in Hallmark's 2011 Valentine's Day collection.

The company paid 12 writers to spend their days penning those love notes (just not to one another). On another note (ha), check out the new Real Couples, Real Funny line. One gem: "You had me at 'babysitter.'"

45%

How much *less* moderate pain 15 college students felt while looking at their significant others. In a recent study, conducted by a team of neuroscientists at Stanford University and the State University of New York at Stony Brook, a hot probe—*yikes!*—was placed in the palm of each subject's hand as he or she gazed at the face of his or her par-amour. (These were relatively new relationships, mind you—nine months long or less.) The study concluded that moments of intense passion can be as effective at blocking pain as powerful drugs, such as morphine and cocaine.



\$711.66

The amount paid for Frederick Douglass's freedom by his friends in 1846. The bill of sale, along with more than 200 original artifacts celebrating African American culture and achievement, can be seen from February 2 to May 1 at the National Geographic Museum, in Washington, D.C., in the exhibition *America I AM: The African American Imprint*. The exhibition will visit 10 metropolitan locations over the next three years.



146

How many muscles are used to smooch, according to *A Compendium of Kisses* (Harlequin, \$14). In the book, author Lana Citron dives into what's really behind a kiss, including the various styles and cultural meanings. In Africa, for example, Citron discovered that some tribes don't kiss on the mouth for fear of losing their souls. (Now, *that* would be a stolen kiss.)

500

The most avocados a single California avocado tree can produce in one year. Holy guacamole! Hass avocados, which make up 95 percent of California's avocado output (the Golden State is the nation's largest producer), are entering their peak season, so stock up. After all, February is American Heart Month, and the fruit (yes, it's a fruit) is full of good monounsaturated fats, which help lower LDL cholesterol levels and decrease the risk of heart disease.