February 2026 Trivia Answers

1. **What did Chester Greenwood (1858-1937) from Farmington, Maine invent? Extra credit: Can you name one or more other inventions Greenwood created?**

   Answer: **Earmuffs**. Chester was 15 when he designed what he later called Greenwood's Champion Ear Protectors. He made them of beaver fur, cloth, and wire, motivated by how cold his ears got while ice skating. Greenwood received a patent for them at age 19. In 1936, worldwide product sales reached 400,000! The town of Farmington celebrates Chester Greenwood Day on the first Saturday of December each year with a big parade.

   Extra credit answer: **A tea kettle**, a variation on a **steel-toothed rake**, an advertising **matchbook**, a machine that produced **wooden spools** for wire and thread, and an **umbrella holder** for mail carriers - among others.



https://downtownfarmington.com/annual-events/

2. **What Pulitzer Prize-winning humor writer described winter weather in Maine as "cold but damp?"**

   Answer: **Dave Barry** (1947 -). Barry is a humor writer who won the Pulitzer Prize for Commentary in 1988, shortly after he announced he was retiring from his 25 years as a syndicated columnist for more than 500 newspapers. He lives in South Florida and, clearly, cold weather is not his favorite. If you are looking for opportunities to be amused, and maybe even laugh out loud, you can find a list of 426 quotes from his works at: https://www.goodreads.com/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&q=Dave+Barry&search_type=quotes

   If you're wondering what Dave Barry has to say about this past year, his *Year in Review 2025* can be found at: https://davebarry.substack.com/p/the-year-in-review

3. **Who was the first to call our nation United States of America?**

   Answer: **Stephan Moylan**. According to *The New York Historical* research, "… on January 2, 1776, seven months before the Declaration of Independence and a week before the publication of Paine's *Common Sense*, Stephan Moylan, an acting secretary to General George Washington, spells it out, 'I should like vastly to go with full and ample powers from the United States of America to Spain' to seek foreign assistance for the cause. … Moylan remained close to George Washington and was appointed Commissioner of Loans in Philadelphia in 1793. … But, for us now, he, like the vast majority of veterans, has remained unheralded and forgotten in the centuries-long efforts to secure and maintain American freedom."

   https://www.nyhistory.org/blogs/coined-phrase-united-states-america-may-never-guess

Note: In efforts to verify the answer to this question, widely believed to be Thomas Paine, I discovered this verifiable answer. What a surprise!

4. **Which American poet volunteered as a nurse during the U.S. Civil War?**

   Answer: Walt Whitman (1819-1892). Whitman had self-published *Leaves of Grass* in 1855 while working as a journalist. At the outbreak of the Civil War, he visited the wounded in New York area hospitals, then traveled to Washington, D.C. to care for his brother who was wounded in battle. He found his brother on the battlefield and was moved by the suffering surrounding them. After volunteering there as a nurse, he decided to stay and work as a volunteer nurse in the Washington, D.C. hospitals for the remainder of the war. He described (graphically and poignantly) his service during this time in the poem, *The Wounded*.

5. **For each 1000 species of animals that ever lived on earth, how many are still alive?**

   Answer: One. According to Wikipedia (with citations for the data), estimates are that less than 0.1% of all species that have ever lived on earth are still alive today, meaning that for every 1,000 species that existed, only about one is currently living. That would mean more than 99.9% of all species are extinct.