WEDNESDAY MORNING: OTHERWISE KNOWN AS MIKE-MIKE-MIKE DAY

My condolences to the poor Mikes among us who have suffered every Hump Day since Geico's TV commercial became so popular.

North Korean nuclear test detected by 'earthquake'
About 10:00 a.m. North Korean local time Wednesday, an event measured at 5.1 on Richter scale occurred near the site of recent underground nuclear testing. South Korea described the "earthquake" as "man-made" shortly after. Interestingly, China called it a "suspected explosion" – blunt language for China so early after the event.

NK's Kim Jong Un later confirmed a "miniaturized hydrogen nuclear device" had been successfully tested. Governments and NGOs are now studying the event to validate this announcement. The explosion's size calls the type of bomb into question – was this a hydrogen or an atomic weapon?

I'm amused at the way the news dispersed. While validating the story, I searched for "North Korea earthquake"; the earliest site in the search was BNO News (a.k.a. @BreakingNews) approximately 45 minutes after the event, followed 17 minutes later by Thompson Reuters Foundation. Not Reuters News, but the Foundation, and only the briefest regurgitation of an early South Korean statement. Interesting.

Spies' ugly deaths
Examining the deaths of spies from 250 AD to present, Lapham's Quarterly shows us how very cruel humans remain toward each other over the last millennia. Clearly, vicious deaths have not foiled the use of spies.

Zika virus outbreak moves Brazil to caution

women against pregnancy now
An outbreak of the mosquito-borne Zika virus in Brazil may be linked to a sizeable uptick in microcephalic births – 2782 this past year, compared to 150 the previous year. The Brazilian government is now cautioning women to defer pregnancy until the end of the rainy season when the virus' spread has been slowed.

Compared to number of Ebola virus cases in 2014-2015, Zika poses a much greater risk in terms of spread and future affected population. The virus has not received much attention, in spite of more than a million cases in Brazil, as symptoms among children and adults are relatively mild.

BCP now available in Oregon over the counter
Thanks to recent state legislation, women in Oregon now have greater access to birth control pills over the counter. California will soon implement the same legislation.

That's one way of reducing the future number of white male libertarian terrorists demanding unfettered use of public space and offerings of snacks.

Microsoft's tracking users' minutes in Windows 10
No longer content with tracking the number of devices using Windows operating system, Microsoft now measures how long each user spends in Windows 10. Why such granular measures? The company won't say.

Worth remembering two things: 1) Users don't *own* operating system software – they're licensees; 2) Software and system holes open to licensors may be holes open to others.

New cross-platform ransomware relies on JavaScript*
Won't matter whether users run Windows, Linux, Apple's Mac OS: if a device runs JavaScript, it's at risk for a new ransomware infection. Do read the article; this malware is particularly insidious because it hides in legitimate code, making it difficult to detect for elimination.

And do make sure you keep backup copies of critical files off your devices in case you're hit by this ransomware.

Buckle up tight in your bobsled. It's all downhill after lunch, kids.

[* *this word edited to JavaScript from Java./Rayne*]