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Vol. 17 No. 50 December 14, 2020

Everybody's Talking

More than cherry soda: When people grab a soda, the roster of flavours usually includes such things as cola, strawberry soda, ginger ale, and limeade. Now, a soft drink company based in Shizuoka Prefecture, Japan, may have won the competition for the weirdest soda flavours. The company, called Kimura Beverage, has produced sodas with flavours that include pickled plums, curry, melon bread, and eel. Developing the flavours is no small undertaking, as it can take up to a year to get it just right.

Plastic plant: A woman from California (U.S.) recently had a big surprise. Caelie Wilkes loves plants. She had a succulent that she carefully looked after for two years, watering it on a schedule. Its beautiful green leaves always seemed healthy. One day, Wilkes decided to transplant her pride and joy into a bigger pot. Imagine her shock when she discovered that the succulent was fake; it had no roots and was glued onto a piece of Styrofoam that was covered with dirt. Luckily, Wilkes has a sense of humour. She posted her story, which garnered lots of funny and sympathetic comments.

Snail power: When thinking about pets, most people conjure up images of cats, dogs, bunny rabbits, parrots, and maybe even pot-bellied pigs. But snails? That is the choice of Pepper Apollo, a woman from the United Kingdom who cares for approximately 150 of the creatures. She started collecting them a few years ago when she found some near her workplace. Today, she keeps her large collection of tiny pets in tiered terrariums where they live a luxurious, well-fed life. Apollo genuinely feels that each one of her little charges has its own personality.

Animal sanctuary: A couple in India love wildlife. In 1998, wildlife photographer Aditya Singh and his artist wife, Poonam Singh, started purchasing farmland near the Ranthambore Tiger Reserve in Rajasthan, northern India. Farmers happily sold their land because the big cats on the reserve threatened farmers' livelihoods. The couple has allowed the forest to regrow on the land, and today it is a lush home for tigers, leopards, wild boars, and other animals. The Singhs even dug watering holes for the animals. Now that these predators have the food and water they need, they are not as much of a threat to farmers.

Quoteable Quotes

"Happiness lies in the consciousness we have of it." —George Sand

"Do not anticipate trouble, or worry about what may never happen. Keep in the sunlight." —Benjamin Franklin

What's Happening

Nov 20 to Jan 2-Magic of Lights Head to Castrol Raceway for a new holiday tradition! You'll embark on a 2.5 KM drive through experience from the comfort of your own vehicle. Be mesmerized as multiple holiday themes come to life with hundreds of thousands of sparkling LED lights!

Dec 1-Dec 31-Luminaria Stroll through the candle-lit pathways of the snow-covered Kurimoto Japanese Garden. University of Alberta Botanic Gardens - 51227 Hwy 60, Parkland County.

Devon Arts Market Christmas Sale Celebrate and experience the unique creativity of our artisans. Find those perfect one-of-a-kind gifts. Runs from noon to 4 pm, Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020. Devon Community Centre, 20 Haven Ave., Devon. More info at ArtsDevon@gmail.com. Masks Mandatory

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Trivia

1. Yale University is located in the U.S. state of New York or Connecticut?
2. The koala bear sleeps an average of 20 hours a day—T/F?
3. IKEA is best known for what?
4. In karate, what colour belt represents the highest level—red or black?
5. Who wrote the popular novel Doctor Zhivago?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)
 You may be so excited about having learned something new that you can hardly stop thinking and talking about it. You might consider sharing these developments with others. Lucky Numbers: 3, 6, 9, 33, 36, 39.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)
 Don't allow the comments of others to frustrate you or ruin your plans. Simply do something that is more fun. You might be in too good a mood to get bogged down. Lucky Numbers: 5, 10, 17, 22, 37, 43.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)
 You may have a positive, "can-do" attitude. Your physical energy and stamina might be high. Feeling energetic could enable you to go after challenges with gusto. Lucky Numbers: 11, 19, 21, 29, 31, 39.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)
 You may feel very compassionate and motivated to aim high. Inspiration, imagination, and dreams might help you to be in touch with your higher forces. Lucky Numbers: 2, 17, 22, 27, 34, 40.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 23)
 Self-confidence and physical energy may run very high. You might undertake any challenge that confronts you. Competition could help you to assert yourself. Lucky Numbers: 12, 15, 23, 33, 38, 49.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)
 Explore your ideas of desires and transformation. You may feel pressure to change, but try to eliminate stress in your life and reach your goals. Lucky Numbers: 1, 4, 14, 24, 34, 44.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Scorpio winners with the luckiest number being 8.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)
 You might act on your passions, but try not to go to extremes. Stay clear about your purpose so that you can succeed without harming yourself or others. Lucky Numbers: 6, 9, 16, 19, 24, 37.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)
 You may feel more compassionate and intuitive. You might be much more willing to empathize, and you could find that some people really do need your help. Lucky Numbers: 8, 11, 15, 25, 35, 45.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)
 You may have an impulse to experiment with new methods or routines. Someone might invite you to do something new. If you go along with them, you may be glad you did. Lucky Numbers: 1, 2, 3, 11, 22, 33.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)
 You may feel pressured to think hard and fast, and to handle many small details. Your quick reaction might help you obtain the great accomplishments you deserve. Lucky Numbers: 21, 26, 29, 31, 36, 39.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)
 You may meet all of your social obligations. You might learn not to take things so personally. Listening well could help you to understand how to improve your relationships. Lucky Numbers: 12, 21, 22, 33, 39, 41.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - March 20)
 You may need to take a real break from your daily routine. You might find that the solace will provide you with a much-needed inner or spiritual rejuvenation. Lucky Numbers: 6, 9, 13, 16, 19, 21.

Did You Know...

Sound the siren: The first civilian ambulances were horse and buggy teams that carried medical equipment and were used to pick up patients in New York City. Dr. Edward L. Dalton of Bellevue Hospital started the service in 1869.

Northern player: Jordin Tootoo was the first player of Inuk descent to play in the National Hockey League. From Rankin Inlet, Nunavut, in northern Canada, his career started with the Nashville Predators in 2003. He retired in 2018.

Fast wave: Tsunamis, those enormous waves that can cause harm to coastal regions, occur most often in the Pacific Ocean's Ring of Fire. They can travel across the ocean at speeds of up to 800 kilometres (500 miles) an hour.

Protein source: Lots of people put tofu into their stir-fries. This soybean product is made from pressing soymilk curds into blocks. Tofu is a source of protein and is enjoyed by those who want protein from a substitute for meat.

Skating phenom: Sonja Henie was a famous figure skater. Born in Oslo, Norway, in 1912, she won many medals in competitions, including three golds in the Winter Olympics of 1928, 1932, and 1936. She died in 1969.

On the Lighter Side

Hotel sign: "Our towels are so fluffy, it will be hard to put them in your suitcase."

The absentminded professor saw a sign on his door that said, "Back in 30 minutes." So he sat down to wait.

A baby brightens up a home. Since ours came, the lights have been on all night!

Life is like high school algebra. Every time you solve one problem, the teacher is waiting to give you another.

No job is so simple that it can't be done wrong.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Connecticut 2. True 3. Home furnishings 4. Red 5. Boris Pasternak

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Recipe of the month

Holiday Haystack Cookies

1 cup semisweet chocolate chips
 1 cup milk chocolate chips
 3 cups chow mein noodles

½ cup roughly chopped almonds
 ½ cup shelled pistachios
 2 tablespoons assorted holiday sprinkles

Level: Easy Total: 1 hr 15 mins Yield: 24 cookies
 Active: 15 mins

- Heat 2 inches of water in a pot to a simmer. Add the semisweet and milk chocolate to a bowl and place over the pot of simmering water. Allow to melt, stirring occasionally, 4 to 5 minutes.
- Meanwhile, add the noodles, almonds and pistachios to a large bowl and set aside.
- When the chocolate has melted completely, pour over the noodle and nut mixture. Mix until everything is well coated in the melted chocolate.
- Using 2 spoons, drop tablespoon mounds onto 2 parchment-lined baking sheets. Sprinkle the holiday sprinkles over the top. Allow to dry completely before storing, about 1 hour.

Source: www.foodnetwork.com

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