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Everybody's Talking

Loyal pet: A Russian woman named Svetlana is not able to leave her pet husky at home. Svetlana goes to work in a mall, but when she leaves her dog in her apartment, the neighbours complain that he howls all day. So, she dresses him up in a blue sweater and takes him to work, leaving him on the sidewalk outside the mall. A homemade sign explains the situation to passersby. Svetlana spends lunch hours and breaks with her pet, but she won't give his real name, so the press has dubbed him "Russian Hachiko." The husky is happy waiting for Svetlana. He gets greetings from shoppers all day long!

Hard cheese: It may not appeal to everyone, but there is a type of cheese made in the Himalayas that provides a great source of protein for those who must survive in cold mountainous regions. Called Chhurpi or Durkha, this cheese is made from the milk of yaks or chauri, a yak-cow cross. The cheese can be cured to be soft or hard. It is the hard version that is the most unusual. It is so hard that, before biting into it, people must keep it in their mouths to soften it up, and chew on the outer layers as they soften. It can take a couple of hours to eat a piece of this cheese in this way, but there is no loss in flavour.

Chalk replica: "Along the River during the Qingming Festival" is a centuries old Chinese work of art on an approximately five-metre (16-ft.) long scroll. It is a favourite of art teacher Zhao Wenrui of Shanxi Province, China. Wanting to surprise his students after the isolation of the COVID-19 pandemic, he made a replica of the famous work using chalkboards and chalk. The finished product took him three months and covers eight chalkboards and, like the original, reveals the lives of the people of the time, from farmers to vendors to boatmen, along with an amazing array of landscapes.

Weird name: A young Mexican man who grew up in the United States had always been called "Bambino" by his parents and friends. However, when his family of four went back to Mexico, the parents decided to let their son know his real name. It is "Zero Zero Three," or "Cero Cero Tres" in Spanish. The parents gave him the name because he is the third of four children. His complete name is "Cero Cero Tres Miller Santos Chablé." Zero Zero Three was able to use his name to his advantage. He won a prize offered by a pizzeria in Merida, Yucatan, Mexico, for having the weirdest name. He received two large pizzas as the prize.

Quoteable Quotes

"Always do what you are afraid to do." —Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Looking forward to things is half the pleasure of them." —L.M. Montgomery

What's Happening

Feb 1 to 28-Hypothermic Half Marathon 10K Virtual event - participate from any location you choose! Run in support of Justsocks.ca - a volunteer operated charity providing new socks to those in need across Canada. www.hypothermichalf.com

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Trivia

1. Haiku is Japanese poetry—T/F?
2. What is the term used for one who unloads ships?
3. In which U.S. state will you find the rock formation El Capitan?
4. An ocarina is newly discovered gemstone or a small wind instrument?
5. What is the dog's name in the Garfield comics?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)

Changing bad habits may enable you to find some new inspiration. Be more flexible and adaptable, but try not to become disorganized or lose sight of your goals. Lucky Numbers: 3, 16, 18, 29, 35, 40.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)

You may be genuine and quick to lend a helping hand and support the ideas of others. Be sure you are comfortable with how much extra responsibility you are taking on. Lucky Numbers: 7, 8, 15, 17, 18, 25.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

You could receive thanks from those who value your ideas and your work ethic. An inviting atmosphere at work and appreciation for a job well done may be indicated. Lucky Numbers: 5, 14, 21, 24, 31, 34.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

Your personal relationship may feel loving, secure, and balanced. You might see an increase in your joint finances. One partner may benefit in some other financial manner. Lucky Numbers: 2, 18, 19, 35, 36, 48.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 23)

You may be forced to confront processes that are no longer valid. You might need to look past the present in order to find better ways to deal with problematic situations. Lucky Numbers: 1, 6, 16, 26, 36, 46.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)

Past experiences may greatly influence your interaction with others and your perceptions. Deepen your research in a specific subject, rather than studying new areas. Lucky Numbers: 4, 18, 24, 28, 34, 38.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)

Your rational judgments or decisions may give you an upsurge of energy. Your sensitivity might help you establish some good emotional bonds with your family members. Lucky Numbers: 4, 18, 22, 24, 26, 46.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

The differences of others may affect your ability to communicate more effectively. Try not to allow anyone's comments to ruin your plans. Look past the immediate. Lucky Numbers: 4, 17, 23, 25, 38, 41.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)

If you seek out the familiar, you may find ways to establish more emotional support. You might be able to earn points by assisting others through new ventures or expansions. Lucky Numbers: 12, 28, 30, 32, 42, 48.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)

You may feel you are in a sad situation. Use your emotional energy to become a vital part of your social group. This may motivate you to feel much more confident. Lucky Numbers: 20, 25, 30, 35, 40, 45.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

You may enjoy spy and mystery stories. An unsolved mystery behind the scenes of a situation might fascinate you. You may be able to probe until you discover the truth. Lucky Numbers: 11, 19, 27, 37, 39, 44.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - March 20)

An interest in psychology may be evident. You might be able to spend time with people, and could really enjoy giving something of yourself and your talents to them. Lucky Numbers: 9, 16, 21, 33, 45, 46.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Taurus winners with the luckiest number being 7.

Did You Know...

No jumping: Elephants may be able to run, but they can't jump. This may be because they have weak leg muscles, despite being large animals. Also, their ankles are not very flexible.

Sweet berries: Hackberries grow on the *Celtis occidentalis* tree in North America. These tiny berries are full of protein and sugars. They are sweet, and some say they taste like candy or dates.

Playing games: Moscow is home to the Museum of Soviet Arcade Games. It has about 60 different games, which are in Russian. For example, one is called *Morskoi Boi*, meaning Sea Battle.

Cheese cousins: A darker, crumblier cousin of the common soft white brie is called brie noir. Made in Seine-et-Marne, not far from Paris, brie noir is made by aging it for as long as two years.

Old fort: An ancient fort on an Arabian Sea island, off the west coast of India, is Murud-Janjira Fort. Locals call it Ajinkya, or "invincible." With its own fresh water source and fish to catch, the self-sufficient residents were difficult to conquer.

On the Lighter Side

First snail: "I have to cross the road."
Second snail: "Be careful, there's a bus coming in an hour."

What belongs to you but is used much more often by your friends? Your name.

A patient asked a doctor to look at his laptop. He thought it had caught a virus.

What can answer in any language, speak without a mouth, and sing without an ear? An echo.

Life is what happens to you while you're busy planning more important things.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. True 2. Stevedore 3. California 4. Small wind instrument 5. Odie

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Recipe of the month

Valentine's Day Brownies

3/4 c. unsalted butter
4 oz. unsweetened chocolate
4 oz. semisweet chocolate
1/2 c. all-purpose flour
1/2 c. unsweetened cocoa powder
3/4 tsp. salt

6 large eggs
1 c. granulated sugar
1 c. packed brown sugar
2 tsp. vanilla extract
vanilla frosting, for decorating

Total time: 40 mins. Yield: 16 servings

- Heat oven to 350°F. Line 13-inch by 9-inch pan with foil; grease foil.
- In 3-quart saucepan, melt butter and chocolates on low, stirring. Remove from heat.
- In bowl, whisk flour, cocoa and salt. In large bowl, with electric mixer on high speed, beat eggs until blended. Gradually add sugars; beat until tripled in volume, about 10 minutes.
- Fold in chocolate mixture and vanilla, then flour mixture. Pour into pan. Bake until toothpick inserted near centre comes out almost clean, 28 to 32 minutes.
- Once cool, cut brownies into hearts freehand or using a heart-shaped cookie cutter. (Tip: Don't let the trimmings go to waste – you can even crumble them onto a sundae!)
- Pipe on store-bought frosting to create cute chocolate "conversation hearts."

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