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Everybody's Talking

Kitty lit: There is nothing like cuddling up with a book—and a cat! That's what visitors to Mon Chat Pitre in Aix-en-Provence, France, can do. It's a bookstore owned by Solène Chavanne and Jean-Philippe Doux, who wanted to design a comforting atmosphere for customers. They brought six kitties from a local animal shelter and provided them with space to roam, a private room to rest, and lots of social interaction with customers. While the store's six cats are not available for new homes (because now they belong to Chavanne and Doux!), the store owners hope that the presence of the felines will encourage others to rescue cats from local shelters.

Bicycle culture: Beginning in the 1970s, kids in Japan began to partake in an interesting hobby called dekochari, which entails elaborately decorating their bicycles. The practice stems from a hobby that was common among adults at the time called dekotora, which means decorating one's truck. Kids were too young to own trucks, but wanted to emulate the fancy vehicles, so they added chrome plating, plywood accessories, extra lighting, and sound systems to their bikes. A culture was born! But the practice faded when both dekotora trucks and dekochari bicycles ran into trouble with the law because of their extra weight. Today, only a few young people continue to practice the hobby.

Happy homecoming: A family in southern England never thought they'd see their beloved cocker spaniel Cassie again. In 2013, their dog disappeared from their yard. Although only a pup at the time, Cassie was equipped with a microchip. Recently, while investigating a disreputable puppy farm, police rescued Cassie from the place. Her microchip turned out to be Cassie's ticket home to her rightful owners. The happy human family got more than they bargained for when police brought Cassie to them with three of her puppies! She has settled back in well, with her tail constantly wagging, and her owners have found good homes for her offspring.

Haunting music: Two brothers from Ecuador are attuned to the sound of silence in the majestic mountains and valleys of their home country. That may be why Luis and Fabian Salazar, who make up the musical group Wuauquikuna, decided to perform the Simon and Garfunkel song "Sound of Silence" on a scenic Ecuadorian hillside. The brothers play panpipes and flutes with great skill, including the quena, quenacho, Chinese flute, zamponas, toyo, and rondador. They play their haunting music to international audiences at folk festivals, and have become known for other cover pieces, such as Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" and "The Power of Love" by Celine Dion.

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Quoteable Quotes

"They always say time changes things, but you actually have to change them yourself."
—Andy Warhol
"I've grown most not from victories, but from setbacks."
—Serena Williams

What's Happening

Nov 23 to Dec 31 - Luminaria Come stroll through the candle-lit pathways of the Kurimoto Japanese Garden, sip hot apple cider, enjoy a capella singers and spot magical glittering ice sculptures. University of Alberta Botanic Gardens - 51227 Hwy 60, Parkland County AB, Alberta

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Trivia

1. Doromania is a compulsion to give gifts, drink water, or dance?
2. What was the last movie in which Bette Davis acted?
3. Where in Canada is the Big Nickel?
4. In Greek mythology, who personified the rainbow?
5. Who told the tales in The 1001 Nights?

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 21 - April 20)

Try taking a practical approach to finally resolving an old, emotional issue now. A conversation with someone older or more experienced might be helpful in finding a solution. Lucky numbers: 2, 17, 40, 41, 45, 48.

TAURUS (April 21 - May 21)

At the end of the week, conversations with others may be smooth and easy. An unusual or unexpected opportunity might even arise from one of them. If so, be proactive. Lucky numbers: 10, 16, 19, 23, 37, 47.

GEMINI (May 22 - June 21)

Be careful in conversations with others or you might experience a setback in something important. Consider adjusting your communication style to encourage a positive outcome. Lucky numbers: 6, 7, 11, 12, 41, 48.

CANCER (June 22 - July 22)

Try to be aware of your environment and of those who share it with you right now. You may see a new opportunity that could help you fulfill your life's purpose. Lucky numbers: 7, 9, 14, 17, 18, 24.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 23)

You may start this week feeling more like your normal self than you have been. How might you use this restored balance of heart and head to initiate positive change? Lucky numbers: 18, 20, 24, 31, 32, 44.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 - Sept. 23)

Your life situation may settle down midweek, after a recent period of disruption. You might be able to happily get back to your normal and well-grounded routine. Lucky numbers: 11, 14, 15, 22, 24, 29.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 - Oct. 23)

You may be entering a period where you feel a strong desire to nurture others. Just be careful to be sure that your assistance isn't making them dependent on you. Lucky numbers: 3, 14, 15, 17, 18, 29.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 - Nov. 22)

Most of us have an Achilles heel that occasionally causes us to stumble. Yours may be resurfacing now. Give some conscious thought to how to address it. Lucky numbers: 1, 24, 25, 26, 40, 47.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 - Dec. 21)

Do you feel that others are putting obstacles in your path? If so, try looking inward to see if you are somehow contributing to the situation. Otherwise, wait for it to change. Lucky numbers: 4, 6, 14, 21, 27, 45.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 20)

An unhelpful belief or behaviour pattern from your past may be getting in your way right now. A deep dive into your unconscious could unearth a meaningful insight. Lucky numbers: 5, 9, 13, 32, 36, 46.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 21 - Feb. 19)

Recently, you may have found yourself working very hard to stay ahead of a curve ball. This week you might uncover an opportunity that could finally reward those efforts. Lucky numbers: 2, 5, 13, 24, 35, 44.

PISCES (Feb. 20 - March 20)

Are you feeling discouraged, with a low level of energy to handle routine tasks? This dynamic may pass within a week or so. In the meantime, take good care of yourself. Lucky numbers: 12, 16, 29, 38, 39, 41.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Taurus winners with the luckiest number being 23.

Did You Know...

- Sensitive flower:** Four species of a flower called Gentiana that grow on the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau in Tibet, have been called "shy" by scientists. If touched, their small, delicate blooms close up in only a few seconds.
- Glacial landscape:** Kenai Fjords National Park, near Seward, Alaska (U.S.), is home to more than 30 glaciers. The ice formations in this breathtakingly beautiful park are in danger due to climate change.
- Solitary creature:** The aardwolf is a member of the hyena family and is smaller than its cousins. Their diet is made up of insects rather than carrion. They live in various parts of Africa and are solitary, nocturnal creatures.
- Warming up:** When people shiver, their skin tightens and their muscles shake, which conserves and generates heat. When that starts happening, it's time to find a warm blanket.
- Titanic facts:** In the 1997 movie *Titanic*, Canadian actor Victor Garber plays shipbuilder executive Thomas Andrews. As shown in the movie, Andrews helped people to safety, but he died when the ship went down.

On the Lighter Side

Where do trombone players in the orchestra sit? Slide by slide.

First kid: "Why is our tennis teacher so mad at you?"
Second kid: "He caught me raising a racquet."

What happens when a computer gets new shoes? It's rebooted.

What did the algebra teacher say to the morning mist? Dew the math.

Knock! Knock! Who's there? Only. Only who? Only you can prevent forest fires.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Give gifts 2. Wicked Stepmother 3. Sudbury, Ontario 4. Mrs 5. Scheherazade

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