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Everybody's Talking

Fun houses: Parents who want to impress their kids with a playhouse that will tickle their imaginations need only call a company in Lethbridge, Alberta (Canada). The brainchild of Tyson Leavitt, Charmed Playhouses produces custom-made structures that can cost anywhere from a few thousand dollars to several hundred thousand. One might resemble a castle, while another might look like a cabin in the woods. They even make "Harry Potter" and "Star Wars" structures. But whatever form they take, the attention to detail is amazing, from windows to furnishings to interior design details. The Charmed Playhouse team builds the structure, takes it apart to move it to the buyer's location, then puts it back together.

Pet problem: When Wyverne Flatt got his beloved potbellied pig Ellie in 2018 when she was quite small, as an emotional support animal, he was living in the U.S. state of South Carolina. But when he moved to the town of Canajoharie, New York, he ran into trouble. Officials in that area consider Ellie a farm animal, and keeping her in the town is illegal. But Flatt refused to give up his 110-pound (50-kilogram) ovine companion, whom he claims is affectionate, smart, and clean. The pet owner, who also has two dogs and a cat, is willing to go to court in an attempt to keep Ellie as part of his household.

False alarm: A concerned driver spotted something that caused her great worry. She thought she saw a swan caught on a fence in the flooded River Stour, in County Dorset, England. The animal lover called the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (RSPCA), which immediately sent help. As Officer Graham Hammond prepared to summon a rescue team, he found a closer vantage point to check out the swan's predicament. Luckily, he was able to cancel the team before they started on their way because he discovered that the trapped feathered friend was actually a white plastic lawn chair. In its topsy-turvy position in the water, it did indeed resemble a swan.

Balcony living: People have been known to live in vans or motor homes or lean-to huts, but how about paying rent to live in a tent on the balcony of someone's apartment? That is what a woman is advertising in Zurich, Switzerland. Places to live in this city are scarce and expensive, so the apartment dweller decided to try subsidizing her rent while providing "living space" for someone in need. The lucky candidate will receive a two-person, waterproof tent, with bedding, and will have access to the kitchen, bathroom, and living room of the apartment. Her advertised rate for the opportunity is 500 Swiss francs per month. The unusual idea apparently is legal in the city.

Quoteable Quotes

"Every exit is an entry somewhere else." —Tom Stoppard
"If you keep going with a definite purpose, you will find the way and reach the destination." —Debasish Mridha

What's Happening

Jan 25 - Beppie Come join Beppie at 10:30am play for kids of all ages at the City Arts Space 105 - 125 Carleton Dr. Her multi-genre family music is modern, fun, innovative, and pushes the boundaries of children's music to appeal to all ages.

Feb 12 - Devon Monthly Arts Market Join us for our Pre-Valentine Market from Noon to 4 pm at the Devon Community Centre. Meet our creative souls and check out unique items for any season, any occasion. Email ArtsDevon@gmail.com for more info.

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Trivia

1. What is a group of islands called?
2. Who was Gerardus Mercator?
3. What colour tongues do Chow Chows and Shar-Peis have?
4. What is the acronym for the colours of the rainbow?
5. Who was the first U.S. president to hold a live TV press conference?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

THIS SPACE FOR RENT

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Recipe of the month

Festive Guacamole Appetizers

2 tubes (8 ounces each) refrigerated seamless crescent dough sheet
1-1/2 teaspoons taco seasoning, divided
20 pretzel sticks, broken in half
4 ounces cream cheese, softened

1 cup guacamole
2 medium sweet yellow peppers
1 medium sweet red pepper
1 medium green pepper
Chopped fresh cilantro, optional

Prep Time: 1 hour Bake: 10 min. + cooling Yield: 40

- 1 Preheat oven to 375°. On an ungreased baking sheet, unroll one tube of crescent dough and press into a 13x8-in. rectangle. Prick with a fork; sprinkle with 3/4 teaspoon taco seasoning. Repeat with remaining dough and seasoning.
- 2 Bake until golden brown, 10-12 minutes. Transfer to wire racks to cool completely.
- 3 Cut each rectangle crosswise to make 4 strips (about 8x4-in.). For trees, cut each strip into 5 triangles, reserving scraps at each end for another use. For trunks, insert a pretzel piece into the base of each triangle.
- 4 Beat cream cheese and guacamole until smooth; spread over trees. Halve and seed peppers. Cut 40 stars from yellow peppers using a 3/4-in. star-shaped cookie cutter. Dice and julienne remaining peppers for tree decorations. Decorate trees with pepper pieces and, if desired, cilantro. Refrigerate until serving.

Source: <https://www.tasteofhome.com>

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 21 – April 20)
Aries are often very focused on self achievements that provide a sense of success. Right now, though, it may be time to expand your sense of self through humanitarian endeavours. Lucky numbers: 9, 17, 19, 21, 46, 48.

LIBRA (Sept. 24 – Oct. 23)
Right now a focus may be on your relationship to your mother or your children. Remember that how well you were nurtured influences how well you are able to do so yourself. Lucky numbers: 12, 19, 27, 29, 41, 47.

TAURUS (April 21 – May 21)
This week you may receive sudden or unusual insights. This information is a gift. Use your steady, practical nature to evaluate how you could use it positively, and then act. Lucky numbers: 4, 11, 14, 16, 32, 37.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24 – Nov. 22)
Scorpios sometimes have difficulty reaching out and connecting with others. However, the Universe may be asking you to do exactly that right now. How can you feel safe in doing so? Lucky numbers: 5, 6, 20, 30, 35, 45.

GEMINI (May 22 – June 21)
While Gemini thought processes are rapid and insightful, execution of plans can be spotty. If you are presented with an opportunity that resonates with your nature, resist the urge to procrastinate. Lucky numbers: 3, 8, 10, 13, 14, 17.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 23 – Dec. 21)
A personal philosophy or belief system is important to many Sagittarians. Now may be a good time for you to explore and then act on those beliefs to help humanity. Lucky numbers: 2, 4, 6, 7, 23, 44.

CANCER (June 22 – July 22)
Protecting yourself and those you love is an important focus for the Cancer-born. Are you feeling confident about your life situation now? If not, what can you do to improve it? Lucky numbers: 6, 9, 11, 12, 21, 39.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 – Jan. 20)
Capricorns usually focus on practical accomplishments. Now, however, you may have the opportunity to unearth a different type of success that is in alignment with your heart, perhaps in the arts. Lucky numbers: 15, 16, 30, 31, 42, 46.

LEO (July 23 – Aug. 23)
Leo is known as the Pied Piper of the zodiac for your ability to draw people to you. How can you make sure your interactions with others are a win-win for everyone? Lucky numbers: 8, 10, 16, 19, 38, 40.

AQUARIUS (Jan 21 – Feb. 19)
The planetary energies right now are strongly Aquarian. How might you be able to use this energy to shine a spotlight on yourself, so that others can see who you truly are? Lucky numbers: 11, 12, 25, 40, 42, 45.

VIRGO (Aug. 24 – Sept. 23)
The work Virgo chooses to do is often a form of service to others. Do you need to make an adjustment in the type of service or how you provide it? Lucky numbers: 1, 7, 20, 22, 42, 43.

PISCES (Feb. 20 – March 20)
You are entering a period of several months where you may want to be sure that you see any romantic partner clearly. Dig deep to understand the truth of a relationship. Lucky numbers: 13, 17, 18, 27, 37, 42.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Gemini winners with the luckiest number being 17.

Did You Know...

- Friendly goat:** Originating in the Cameroon Valley of West Africa, pygmy goats have been found to make good pets. They are cute and playful, and also very friendly and social. They need a big yard with a high fence, and grass or hay to eat.
- Smelly basement:** One way to reduce the musty smell that sometimes plagues basements is to use a dehumidifier. These appliances remove mildew-inducing moisture from the air, which contributes to the musty odor.
- Very big berry:** Eggplants are considered berries because they come from a single flower. However, with all the grilling, frying, baking, and roasting that occurs in the kitchen, they are often thought of as a vegetable.
- Busy volcano:** Mauna Loa in Hawaii (U.S.) is the largest volcano in the world. It is 13,681 feet (4,170 m) above sea level. Although its last eruption was in 1984, it has erupted 33 times since 1843, an average of every five years.
- Moldable toy:** Silly Putty was created in the 1940s, and is still available today. Made from boric acid and silicone oil, its invention was an accident. When it didn't work as a synthetic rubber substitute, it was marketed as a toy.

On the Lighter Side

Did you hear about the skeleton comedian? He tried tibia little humerus.

Knock! Knock! *Who's there?* Zombies. *Zombies who?* Zombies make honey, others don't.

When I saw the pile of free pants on the street, I really picked up the slack.

Student: "The moon was full the other day, but now it's only a crescent."
Teacher: "Don't worry. It's just a phase."

What kinds of haircuts do sponges get? Bobs.

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Archipelago 2. Cartographer 3. Blue-black 4. ROYGBIV 5. John F. Kennedy

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