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Everybody's Talking

Big, nice dog: People who want a dog that looks like a wolf might consider a Tamaskan. In the 1980s in Britain, breeders mixed several different kinds of dogs, including the German Shepherd, Siberian Husky, Alaskan Malamute, and Samoyed, and possibly some Czechoslovakian Wolfdog, resulting in the new, domesticated Tamaskan breed. These large, high-energy dogs grow to between about 24 and 28 inches (61 to 71 centimetres) tall, and typically live for 14-15 years. They are friendly, loyal, and gentle, and also very intelligent. Because they are so smart, they are well suited for training and need lots of exercise. So owners have to be prepared to provide them with ample mental stimulation.

Colourful sight: Butterfly lovers might want to plan a visit to the Pismo Beach Monarch Butterfly Grove in the state of California (U.S.). The best time to go is between the months of October and February. That is when thousands of the endangered, orange-and-black insects congregate to enjoy the sunny, warm weather of the area, which is located between the cities of San Jose and Los Angeles. The butterflies gather in clusters in the eucalyptus trees that populate the grove. To get there, the butterflies have migrated long distances to avoid the cold and frigid conditions of winters in the northern United States and Canada.

Biodegradable bags: Lucy Hughes, an engineering student at University of Sussex in Brighton, England, has invented a product that eventually may help reduce the prevalence of single-use plastic. Called MarinaTex, the product is made of fish scales and skin, which are waste materials at fish processing plants. It uses red algae as a binding agent. This new "plastic" is biodegradable in about six weeks. Like other widely used plastic bags, the MarinaTex ones are transparent, so users can see what kind of sandwiches are packed in their lunches. Another good thing about this invention is that, quite literally, tonnes of raw materials are available. For her work, Hughes won a James Dyson Award for design engineering.

Peacock frenzy: Car owners in the city of Surrey, British Columbia (Canada), have been having trouble keeping their vehicles dent-free. They're not worried about fender benders, hail, or vandals. The problem is wild peacocks. When the birds that live in the area see their own reflections in the shiny cars, especially dark-coloured vehicles, they mistake them for other peacocks and go into attack mode, using their talons and beaks on car doors and windows. This phenomenon, along with the noise from the peacocks' shrieking, has caused many dollars worth of damage and many sleepless nights for area residents. Experts say not much can be done, except to discourage anyone from feeding these birds.

Quoteable Quotes

"Happiness makes up in height for what it lacks in length."

—Robert Frost

"Mistakes are a fact of life. It is the response to the error that counts."

—Nikki Giovanni

What's Happening

Jan 1 ongoing - Friend Den The Friend Den is a new program for kids in kindergarten to grade 3 with lessons on coping skills, empathy, and gratitude. This runs on Mondays from 3:15-4:30 at the Vegreville Family Resource Network. Registration is required call 780-632-2912

Apr 29-30 - Melodies at the Manor Join the South East Edmonton Seniors Association as they present Melodies at the Manor on the 29th 7pm and the 30th 1pm. Visit seesa.ca for more information

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Trivia

1. _____ was the horse of fictional character Don Quixote.
2. What is the medical term for the kneecap?
3. Actor Ben Kingsley's birthname was _____.
4. What is the diameter of the planet Venus?
5. The Grimaldis are the family who have ruled Monaco since 1297—T/F?

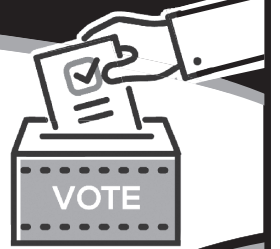
(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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