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Vol. 21 No. 13 March 25, 2024

Everybody's Talking

Belly dance: Massachusetts Institute of Technology has developed a new high-tech diet pill that vibrates after it's swallowed. VIBES (Vibrating Ingestible BioElectronic Stimulator) activates stomach receptors to induce a sense of fullness. Featured in the journal Science Advances, VIBES is hailed as a potential breakthrough in weight loss technology. With human trials pending, initial tests on pigs showed that 30 minutes of VIBES activity resulted in a 40% drop in food consumption. The mechanism works by tricking stomach stretch receptors. This signals the hypothalamus to produce hormones that create the sensation of being full. The innovation holds promise as a novel approach to trimming down, with a dance-worthy twist.

Autumn colours: Many countries take pride in their colourful autumn foliage, but nothing can really beat the ginkgo biloba tree in the village of Bangye-ri in Gangwon Province, South Korea. The tree is thought to be over 800 years old, and is a designated national monument. It measures 33 metres (108 ft.) high. In the fall, its leaves turn a blazing yellow-gold. As they fall, they leave a yellow carpet on the ground around the tree. In the last few years, visitors have been flocking to the tree, even though no restaurants or convenience stores are nearby. Legend has it that the tree grew from the cane of an ancient Buddhist monk.

Alligator trick: If the temperature drops low enough in Ocean Isle Beach, North Carolina (U.S.), the ponds at Swamp Park Outdoor Adventure Center can freeze. So what are the 12 resident alligators to do? The animals have an ability to go into a state called brumation. They can survive because they protect themselves by sticking their snouts up into the air above the water. That way, they can breathe while the water freezes around them. Visitors to the park can just see the snouts peeking above the ice. The alligators at the park can't be returned to the wild for various reasons, so the park protects and cares for them.

Ugly fountain: Sculptures are often commissioned for special anniversaries. That's what happened in Vienna, Austria, when authorities wanted to mark 150 years of the city's renowned modern water system. The commissioned piece is a fountain, but critics say it is extremely ugly. Costing 1.8 million Euros, the fountain consists of 33 very unusual "humanoid" figures that encircle the spouting water. Gelitin is the Viennese artist group that designed the piece. While the selection jury liked the "togetherness" idea of the design, the public does not like it at all. There has been much backlash, including by opposing political parties, about the installment.

Quoteable Quotes

"Joy is not in things; it is in us." —Richard Wagner
"One changes from day to day ... every few years one becomes a new being." —George Sand

What's Happening

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Trivia

1. What horse race was established at Pimlico Race Course, in Maryland (U.S.), in 1873?
2. Ben Franklin, Thomas Edison, or Albert Einstein invented the phonograph?
3. Australia and Antarctica are drifting apart—T/F?
4. In 1928, Col. Jacob Schick patented the hair dryer, electric razor, or blender?
5. Who wrote The Metamorphosis?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 20 - April 19)



Unresolved wounds from the past often block our compassion for others. This week may be a good time to work on breaking through this dynamic.

Lucky numbers: 12, 13, 15, 17, 29, 33.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)



At midweek, look for an opportunity to accomplish a goal that is close to your heart. This may require you to take a risk outside of your comfort zone. Lucky numbers: 6, 8, 16, 21, 32, 37.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)



Your head and heart may be out of sync at week's end. If you can't resolve this stalemate, you may want to wait a few days to make important decisions. Lucky numbers: 7, 13, 18, 32, 41, 48.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)



The Cancer-born often focus on home and family. At week's end, however, you may find that you have a desire for a journey, for either travel or study. Lucky numbers: 10, 11, 13, 17, 23, 41.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)



An event this week may encourage you to reach outside yourself and consider your role in the world. Achieving this may require an adjustment in your viewpoint. Lucky numbers: 1, 9, 30, 31, 37, 45.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)



Virgos can be reluctant to act unless everything perfectly lines up, which might be rare. Consider taking a leap of faith in the coming weeks, but bring a parachute. Lucky numbers: 4, 10, 12, 26, 40, 47.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)



Have you reviewed the goals and plans you set at your birthday? Is one of them close to completion? If so, now may be a good week to cross the finish line. Lucky numbers: 5, 6, 15, 20, 35, 39.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)



Midweek, others may refuse to see the truth of a situation. If you can't achieve consensus, consider stepping back for a few days until this energy passes. Lucky numbers: 8, 13, 14, 29, 37, 38.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)



Week's end may provide a monthly opportunity to make an emotional reset. Is there an issue about which you should take a deep breath and find a new approach? Lucky numbers: 3, 4, 10, 15, 29, 31.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)



Capricorns often have a serious demeanour, aimed at accomplishment. Sometimes cutting loose and being joyful is OK. Week's end may be a good time for that. Lucky numbers: 9, 14, 23, 31, 35, 36.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)



In 2024, Pluto begins a 20-year journey through your sign, inspiring a humanitarian evolution. How can you contribute to this and where should you begin? Lucky numbers: 11, 16, 18, 23, 27, 29.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20)



Pisces can fall into a navel gazing trap, excessively contemplating the state of the world. The next few weeks may offer a strong opportunity for action. Lucky numbers: 2, 8, 16, 29, 32, 37.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Capricorn winners with the luckiest number being 31.

Did You Know...

Getting rich: National Basketball Association All-Star LeBron James's 2015 Nike sneakers endorsement deal could earn the U.S. basketball star over \$1 billion before retirement. That's a lucrative business arrangement and a big number!

Saving whales: Mr. Splashy Pants was the name given to a humpback whale by Greenpeace in its 2007 Great Whale Trail Expedition campaign to raise awareness about the threatened whales. The campaign was successful: the whales are no longer hunted.

Borrowed words: About 60% of English words have Greek or Latin roots. In science and technology, that figure is over 90%. The direct influence of the classical languages began in the Renaissance and continues today.

Hit the road: Route 66 is one of the most famous highways in the U.S. The 2,448-mile (3,940 km) road was featured in the 1946 hit song "(Get Your Kicks On) Route 66," as well as the *Route 66* television series.

Bath time: Canada has a unique place for people who like to bathe in cold water. Bathtub Island in Lake Superior, in Ontario, is so named because high waves from the lake wash over and fill its basin shape, creating a natural bathtub.

On the Lighter Side

Why couldn't Dracula's wife get to sleep? Because of his coffin. Tom couldn't figure out how to repair the washing machine, so he threw in the towel.

Did the drill finally finish its supper? Every last bit.

Mother: "Can you explain this D and F on your report card?" Child: "Yes, it stands for 'Doing Fine.'"

Knock! Knock! *Who's there?* Gable. *Gable who?* Gable to leap tall buildings in a single bound!

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Preakness 2. Thomas Edison 3. True 4. Electric razor 5. Franz Kafka

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