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## Everybody's Talking

**Stair climb:** In the Bernese Oberland region of Switzerland, a staggering staircase runs directly beside the Niesenbahn mountain railway, climbing all the way from the valley to the peak of Mount Niesen. Built for railway maintenance, this service stairway is the world's longest, with more than 11,000 steps rising about 1,670 meters (5,479 ft.). Its zigzag path closely hugs the tracks, creating a dramatic and memorable ascent up the steep mountain slope. The staircase is closed most of the time, except during an annual race that challenges determined participants to reach the summit on foot. For everyone else, the railway offers the same breathtaking panoramic views without the grueling climb.

**Pavement clock:** In New York City, an unusual clock has been keeping time beneath people's feet for generations, near the corner of Maiden Lane and Broadway in Lower Manhattan. The first version was installed outside the Barthman jewellery store in the 1890s, designed to stand out in a city still adjusting to electric light. Unlike typical street clocks, this one was set into the sidewalk itself, carefully protected by glass and illuminated at night. Later, the jump-hour design was replaced with a more traditional round face, which remains visible today. When photographer Ida Wyman captured it in the 1940s, her image turned a clever marketing idea into a lasting icon of New York's streetscape.

**Bird ingenuity:** Flocks of sulfur-crested cockatoos in Sydney, Australia, have been observed mastering an unlikely skill: working outdoor drinking fountains for their own refreshment. Using their claws, they perch on the spring-loaded handle and push with their weight until a steady water flow begins. The task takes effort, balance, and coordination, and many tries end without success, but persistence often wins them a drink. Remarkably, groups of birds sometimes gather nearby, appearing to line up politely as each one waits for a chance. Researchers think the appeal could be the cleaner taste compared with streams, the reduced risk of predators, or simply the enjoyment of figuring out a challenge.

**Plastic breakthrough:** Scientists in Japan have engineered a new plastic that disappears when exposed to seawater, turning into compounds that can be safely absorbed by surrounding marine life. Built from a salt-linked polymer, the material is strong enough for packaging yet is unstable in salty environments, where it dissolves much faster than conventional plastics. Unlike the bottles and containers people use every day, this version avoids releasing toxins, microplastics, or harmful gases. It can also naturally break down in soil within weeks, thanks to natural sodium content. Interest from manufacturers already is steadily growing, as the invention offers a clear path toward reducing global plastic pollution.

## Quoteable Quotes

"Art is the most intense mode of individualism that the world has known."  
~ Oscar Wilde

"Joy comes, grief goes, we know not how."  
~ James Russell Lowell

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Waskasoo Environmental Education Society presents **Petals & Paws: Easter Family Fun** April 4 from 1 to 4 p.m. Engaging spring-themed stations throughout the Kerry Wood Nature Centre (6300-45 Avenue), for kids and families! For more information, call 403.346.2010 or email [general@waskasoopark.ca](mailto:general@waskasoopark.ca).

Don't miss the **Hop Into Spring Market** March 28 from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Cenovus Learning Common-Red Deer Polytechnic (100 Donald Blvd.). For more information, email [inquiries.serenityevents@gmail.com](mailto:inquiries.serenityevents@gmail.com).

## Trivia

- Gutties is Scottish slang for shoes, eyes, or candles?
- What unique feature of a bird's skeletal system allows it to fly?
- What is the capital of Algeria?
- Who wrote the play *The Cherry Orchard*?
- A perennial plant blooms and dies in one growing season – T/F?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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# Your Weekly Horoscope

## ARIES

(March 20 – April 19)



At midweek, you may feel hemmed in by responsibilities. If this stirs up an old wound, remember to love yourself. That could change your view of the situation. Lucky numbers: 6, 9, 38, 46, 47, 48.

## TAURUS

(April 20 – May 20)



Are you in conflict with others about how to proceed? Working to lower the emotional temperature can help the situation and give you a new skill to employ. Lucky numbers: 7, 18, 19, 21, 26, 41.

## GEMINI

(May 21 – June 20)



You may find yourself on "information overload" at the beginning of the week. Try waiting a few days, then sort through the data to look for new options. Lucky numbers: 5, 15, 16, 22, 28, 37.

## CANCER

(June 21 – July 22)



You may want to retreat midweek to process your emotions. Even if you can't fully withdraw from the world, carving out moments of self care is important. Lucky numbers: 11, 13, 22, 33, 44, 48.

## LEO

(July 23 – Aug. 22)



Your natural enthusiasm may get an energy boost at week's end. How can you positively channel it to achieve something? Resist the temptation to just have a good time. Lucky numbers: 14, 15, 18, 19, 27, 35.

## VIRGO

(Aug. 23 – Sept. 22)



Are you comfortable with your relationships? If not, what adjustment in your view might improve the situation? The benefit of doing so should outweigh the effort. Lucky numbers: 3, 11, 17, 21, 26, 36.

## LIBRA

(Sept. 23 – Oct. 22)



You may be having opposition in your relationships. Instead of arguing, try having honest conversations so each person can take responsibility for needed changes. Lucky numbers: 8, 24, 26, 30, 31, 33.

## SCORPIO

(Oct. 23 – Nov. 21)



Your intuitive perception about others may create relationship difficulties. For a few months, the energy might encourage you to understand and mitigate this dynamic. Lucky numbers: 10, 16, 35, 37, 39, 41.

## SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22 – Dec. 21)



Your head and your heart may be at a stalemate early this week. If you can, try to find a compromise. Otherwise, perhaps wait a few days for this energy to pass. Lucky numbers: 2, 5, 7, 26, 34, 37.

## CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 – Jan. 19)



Capricorns usually focus on ambition to build success. But midweek, the need to nurture your self or others may interfere with these efforts. Don't resist the impulse. Lucky numbers: 9, 16, 17, 23, 43, 44.

## AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20 – Feb. 18)



As an Aquarius, you may be at the forefront of the evolution that Pluto represents in your sign. However, your relationships with others could be the key to change. Lucky numbers: 1, 4, 27, 28, 33, 36.

## PISCES

(Feb. 19 – March 20)



Pisces has a desire that we all just get along. For the next few months, how might you be able to advance this goal in a realistic way that could create lasting change? Lucky numbers: 4, 12, 24, 27, 47, 48.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Leo winners, with the luckiest number being 35.

## Did You Know...

**Lava glow:** The lava lamp's creator, Edward Craven Walker, once noticed a quirky homemade egg timer that used heated liquids rising and falling in a container. Fascinated by the effect, he turned the idea into the famous lamp of drifting, glowing wax.

**Sun boxes:** In the 1700s, experimenter Horace de Saussure nested layers of glass around a dark base to capture daylight. Hours later, the sealed chamber grew hot enough to bake food, marking one of the earliest attempts at cooking with sunlight.

**Wooden wheels:** The first bicycles were little more than wooden frames with two wheels, known as "dandy horses." Riders pushed them along with their feet, gliding on smooth streets until cities began banning them for colliding with pedestrians.

**Skipped leap:** Most leap years add a day every four years, but not always. To keep the calendar from drifting, we skip the extra day every 100 years unless the year is divisible by 400. That rare exception helps keep our timing a little more in sync with the sun.

**Door spin:** Revolving doors weren't just about saving energy or keeping out drafts. They also were designed to sidestep awkward etiquette about who enters first. Later, their clever design proved useful in helping buildings stay quieter and more energy efficient.

## On the Lighter Side

What do you call a man down in a hole? Doug.  
How do you make a tuna melt? Pay it a nice compliment!  
I'd tell you my autumn joke, but you probably wouldn't fall for it.  
Passenger: "It's my first time in a plane. Will you bring the plane down safely?"  
Pilot: "I've never left one up there yet."  
Knock! Knock! Who's there? Carmen. Carmen who? Carmen get it.

## Answers

4. Anton Chekhov 5. False, annual  
Trivia answers: 1. Shoes 2. Hollow bones 3. Algiers

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# Recipe of the month

## Bangers and Mash

2 large potatoes, peeled, quartered  
1/4 cup whole milk  
1/4 cup butter  
Salt and pepper, to taste

**Sausages and Gravy:**  
6 Irish sausages (or other pork sausage)  
1 tablespoon butter  
1 medium onion, thinly sliced  
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour  
2 cups beef or ham stock  
Salt and pepper, to taste

Prep Time: 20 min Cook Time: 45 min Yield: 6 servings

- Bring a large pot of water to a boil. Add potatoes; cook 20-25 minutes or until tender. Drain; let sit 5 minutes. Break potatoes up with a masher. Add butter, milk, salt and pepper; mash until potatoes are creamy and fluffy.
- Preheat oven to 350°. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat. Add sausages; cook 2-3 minutes per side or until lightly browned. Remove to a 15x10x1-in. baking sheet. Bake 15-18 minutes or until cooked through.
- In the skillet with the sausage drippings, add onions and butter. Cook over medium heat until tender, 5-6 minutes. Stir in salt and pepper. Stir in flour; slowly whisk in stock. Bring to a simmer; let reduce and thicken 3-4 minutes, stirring frequently.
- Dollop mashed potatoes on plates; top with sausages and gravy.

A classic favourite perfect for your St. Patrick's Day meal - or any day!

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

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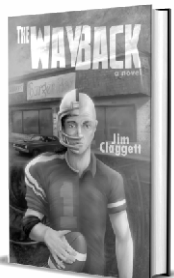
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