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Everybody's Talking!

Root signals: In forests of the Dolomites in northern Italy, researchers observed trees adjusting their internal energy during a solar eclipse, with the largest, most established ones shifting long before any shadow crossed the canopy. Using low-power field equipment, the team detected electrical activity moving between trunks, including faint responses from broken stumps still rooted in place. It seemed to be a shared, timed reaction from the trees themselves. The findings hint at an underlying system of awareness, quietly led by older trees. Though not visible from the forest floor, the patterns suggested a kind of group timing. It may be that trees don't just grow together, but they "think" together, too.

Steep ride: In the Swiss Alps, a cable car climbs one of the steepest, open-air tracks in Europe. Originally built to move supplies for a mountain dam, it now carries visitors up the slope for the views. The car travels backward with no roof and just a bar across your legs, which adds to the thrill. It moves at a slow pace, but the sharp incline makes the ride feel more intense than expected. From the top, you can follow a lakeside trail or hike down to the village of Handegg. The mountain scenery includes forests, cliffs, and snowy peaks. The starting point is only accessible by stairs, so it may not suit everyone. Still, the ride offers a rare way to explore the high alpine landscape.

Pinball panic: Long before it became a popular pastime, pinball was seen in many parts of the U.S. as a dangerous threat to society. In the 1940s, the machines often were linked to illegal gambling and organized crime. Critics said they targeted young people and drained their money, especially since early versions didn't even have flippers, instead relying on chance. Mayors and judges launched aggressive campaigns against the games, raiding shops and smashing machines as part of public crackdowns. Pinball was blamed for encouraging bad habits, wasting time, and causing trouble in neighborhoods. Despite the bans, the game's appeal didn't fade, it just went underground for a while.

Pillar greenery: Along a crowded expressway in Mexico City, towering supports have been coated with layers of climbing plants and living foliage. These upright plant walls use recycled materials and filtered rainwater, kept thriving by a sensor-based system that tracks moisture and temperature. The design not only softens the harsh lines of traffic, it turns old infrastructure into something unexpectedly alive. Commuters say the air feels fresher and the view more calming. Beyond the visual impact, the project has created jobs and inspired new ways of thinking about public space. It's a functional mix of greenery and design that makes better use of space most people had stopped noticing.

Quoteable Quotes

"Every now and then a man's mind is stretched by a new idea or sensation, and never shrinks back to its former dimensions."
—Oliver Wendell Holmes, Sr.

"Simplicity, patience, compassion. These three are your greatest treasures."
—Lao Tzu

What's Happening

Lego Fun For Everyone - Build whatever your mind can imagine with Legos that are provided. All ages welcome. Jan. 27, 3 to 4 p.m. Malcolm Purvis Library, 510 Melton St., Magnolia.

69th Houston Money Show - FREE! Lone Star Convention Center, 9055 Airport Road at FM 3083, Conroe. Friday, Jan. 16, 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 17, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sell your coins, your gold and silver and jewelry for cash! Fun kids activities on Saturday include Treasure Chest Grab, Put-A-Penny-In-Slot Game and Youth Numismatist Auction. Go to HoustonCoinShow.org for a list of events.

2026 MLK Unity Parade - Jan. 19 in Downtown Houston originating on San Jacinto & Pease street beginning at 10 a.m. The parade's theme is 'Embracing the Oneness of Humanity' featuring more than 300 culturally diverse performance groups from across the nation and around the world. For more information visit: www.mlkgandeparade.org

Volunteer Opportunities at JoyRide Center - Share in the joys of equine-assisted services by helping people with special abilities in your community. Go to JoyRideCenter.org for opportunities and information.

JukeBox Bingo - Fridays from 6 to 9 p.m. at Lone Pint Brewery, 507 Commerce St., Magnolia. For more events and info, go to LonePint.com

Scan here to see more What's Happenings:



Trivia

1. A pangolin is a mammal—T/F?
2. Does nutmeg come from an evergreen or deciduous tree?
3. The ____ Decimal System catalogues items in a library.
4. What volcano in Italy destroyed the city of Pompeii?
5. Who wrote the book *Wicked*, a novel set in Oz?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES (March 20 - April 19)



You may get a boost of ambition and energy in the middle of the week. But be careful about being overly aggressive with others whose assistance you might need now. Lucky numbers: 14, 21, 30, 31, 37, 47.

TAURUS (April 20 - May 20)



This week, you may get a sudden insight that has been trying to break through for a while. Energy and discipline now could be available to you to manifest this possibility. Lucky numbers: 10, 15, 24, 34, 43, 44.

GEMINI (May 21 - June 20)



Geminis tend to accumulate bits of information, simply to have the knowledge at hand. For the next few weeks, you may have an opportunity to use it to help humanity at large. Lucky numbers: 5, 12, 18, 36, 41, 43.

CANCER (June 21 - July 22)



The focus for Cancers is often their immediate family and friends. However, the Aquarius energy this month encourages you to adjust your view toward humanity as a whole. Lucky numbers: 3, 7, 24, 27, 34, 46.

LEO (July 23 - Aug. 22)



It has been about six months since your birthday. Did you set a new plan then? Now would be a good time to review progress and think about any changes you may need to make. Lucky numbers: 2, 4, 13, 29, 36, 39.

VIRGO (Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)



You may experience a lack of confidence at midweek. This could pass in a few days, so be patient and acknowledge any feelings of depression. Retreat may be beneficial now. Lucky numbers: 8, 12, 13, 23, 28, 44.

LIBRA (Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)



The desire to maintain peace can be very strong for some Libras, but also can create an unhealthy balance. You may feel strongly, midweek, that this dynamic needs to change. Lucky numbers: 6, 13, 25, 28, 45, 48.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)



Communicating your intuitive insights and truth to those who would prefer to turn away from them is difficult. At the week's end, you may have more endurance for this effort. Lucky numbers: 12, 17, 24, 25, 41, 44.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)



A theme for Sagittarius is to develop a philosophy that is genuine, and they often advocate this to others. You may be interested now in how this connects to humanity's evolution. Lucky numbers: 7, 11, 15, 18, 29, 46.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)



Capricorn ambitions often are directed at generating success in their own lives. This month, the universe may ask you to step out of your comfort zone to help others succeed. Lucky numbers: 11, 21, 22, 26, 30, 46.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)



Pluto is fully anchored into Aquarius, signaling a critical period of human evolution for the next decade. Aquarius energy is strong now, providing an opportunity in this regard. Lucky numbers: 1, 8, 9, 28, 42, 47.

PISCES (Feb. 19 - March 20)



This week you may find yourself going back over territory of the past several years. Now is the moment to achieve one final insight that you could take into the future. Lucky numbers: 4, 12, 13, 31, 33, 35.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favor Taurus winners with the luckiest number being 15.

Did You Know...

Flutter vision: Butterflies can see ultraviolet patterns on flowers, invisible to human eyes, that help them find nectar. Some species also migrate remarkable distances, crossing vast landscapes each year on their seasonal journeys.

Echo magic: Ancient amphitheaters were built with curved designs and stone materials that carried voices across vast crowds. Even without modern equipment, their structure let every word and note ring out clearly.

Berry bounce: Fresh cranberries have a fun trick. If you drop one, it should bounce, showing it's nice and firm. This little test helps people pick the best berries for festive sauces, relishes, or chutneys at home.

Billboard bans: Some cities have taken down outdoor advertising altogether, removing giant signs from streets and buses. Supporters say these ads clutter public spaces, while critics argue they bring revenue and consumer choice.

Green alarm: That sweet smell of fresh-cut grass is actually a chemical distress call. When damaged, plants release airborne signals called green leaf volatiles (GLV). These warnings even attract helpful insects. Call it nature's version of a silent alarm.

On the Lighter Side

Knock! Knock! *Who's there?* Jess. *Jess who?* Jess me and my shadow.

What only starts to work only when it's been fired? A rocket.

Some cats are great bowlers, such as alley cats.

When everything is coming your way, you're in the wrong lane.

Teacher: "The plural of mouse is mice. What is the plural of baby?"

Student: "Twins."

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. True 2. Evergreen 3. Dewey 4. Mount Vesuvius 5. Gregory Maguire

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