

by Scott_LaFee

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

The Poles once considered it unlucky to refuse the request of a pregnant woman. If you did, it was thought, mice would come and chew your clothes.

PRIME NUMBERS

9.5 - Average number of species added each year to the U.S. endangered species list by federal officials under George W. Bush

PRIME NUMBERS - The average number of species added each year to the U.S. endangered species list by federal officials under George W. Bush is just over nine. CNS Photo.

WHERE IN THE WORLD - This is a picture of the salty Sea of Okhotsk off Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula. CNS Photo.

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ELECTRON INK - What was the greatest engineering achievement of the last century? Was it the car, the computer, the toaster? CNS Photo.

FLY ME TO THE MOON - Recently, NASA unveiled its plans to put astronauts on the moon by 2020 and build a permanent lunar base by 2024. CNS Photo.

65 - Average number added annually during the Clinton administration

59 - Average number added annually during the administration of Bush's father, George H.W.

BRAIN SWEAT

Solve this riddle, written in the form of a limerick:

There was a young man from Dreck

Whose toy was quite low-tech.

With a twist and a turn

He could draw an urn

But upended, it all went to heck.

What object is being described?

JUST ASKING

What does the phrase "now then" really mean?

ELECTRON INK

Great Engineering Achievements

www.greatachievements.org

What was the greatest engineering achievement of the last century? Was it the car, the computer, the toaster? The National Academy of Engineering offers its top 20 list, with concise descriptions and explanations.

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

An Etch-A-Sketch

VERBATIM

"I don't believe in personal immortality; the only way I expect to have some version of such a thing is through my books.

"I write for the same reason I breathe: because if I didn't, I would die."

- Isaac Asimov, the prolific writer of science and fiction (more than 500 books), who died nonetheless in 1992 at age 62.

FLY ME TO THE MOON

Recently, NASA unveiled its plans to put astronauts on the moon by 2020 and build a permanent lunar base by 2024. Among the details was a list of 181 recommendations for things to do once people get there.

The list was the result of a NASA-sponsored survey of more than 1,000 people in industry, academia and the 13 international space agencies. Each was asked, essentially: "If you woke up on the moon tomorrow, what would you want to do?"

NASA got 181 answers - or at least 181 of what it calls "good ideas." Many, of course, were science-related, such as building various kinds of observatories or instrument platforms for peering farther out into space.

But most of the ideas were pretty pragmatic, dealing with learning how to actually live on an alien world - everything from safeguarding astronauts from radiation and micrometeors to growing food in an environment lacking in both air and water.

"We want to learn how to live off the land and not depend so much on supplies from Earth," said Tony Lavoie, head of NASA's Lunar Architecture Team.

A few commercial ideas were cited as well. The moon, it was suggested, would be a good place to build new solar power plants (beaming the energy to Earth), store excess digital data (plenty of space in space) or develop mines.

There were also the proposals for space tourist hotels and, for those who couldn't make the trip, remote-controlled rovers that they could take out for virtual drives across the lunar landscape from the comfort of their earthbound living rooms.

NASA insists it will seriously consider them all; you can, too. The complete list is linked to a NASA release at www.nasa.gov (search for "lunar exploration objectives").

WHERE IN THE WORLD

Tucked between Siberia and Russia's frozen Kamchatka Peninsula is the shallow, salty Sea of Okhotsk. The flow of cold Arctic air and its effect on the sea are evident in this image, courtesy of NASA's Terra satellite. Large chunks of sea ice float on the water, separated by cracks through which the black surface of the sea is evident.

When this image was taken, cold winds were sweeping over the ice. Where the frigid air met the moist air over open water, clouds formed. The winds then combed the clouds into long streamers, formations called cloud streets.

Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee