

by Scott_LaFee

THERE'S A WORD FOR THAT

VERBATIM - 'Space isn't remote at all. It's only an hour's drive away if your car could go straight upwards.' -- scientist Fred Hoyle. CNS Photo. WHAT IS IT? - This is an ear mite, a common pest of cats. It can cause inflammation, skin disease and even deafness if not treated. Unlike some mites, cat ear mites do not burrow into the skin, but reside within the ear canal. CNS Photo. TRUE FACTS - Seventeen million men alive today are descended from the Mongol marauder Genghis Khan. CNS Photo.

THERE'S A WORD FOR THAT - The acetabulum is the cup-shaped hollow in the hipbone into which the head of the femur fits to form a ball-and-socket joint; or an anatomical cup, such as the sucker on a tapeworm. CNS Photo. STREET-SMART ANTS - Certain species of army ants in the rain forests of Central and South America conduct spectacular predatory raids involving upwards of 200,000 foraging individuals. In doing so, they blaze temporary trails through the forest. CNS Photo. Acetabulum - The cup-shaped hollow in the hipbone into which the head of the femur fits to form a ball-and-socket joint; or an anatomical cup, such as the sucker on a tapeworm.

BRAIN SWEAT

Can you translate the following:

1. you cont ol r

2. LOV

3. ch poorri

VERBATIM

Space isn't remote at all. It's only an hour's drive away if your car could go straight upwards.

- Fred Hoyle

POETRY FOR SCIENTISTS

The world would be a safer place,

If someone had a plan,

Before exploring outer space,

To find the inner man.

- E.Y. Harburg

JUST ASKING

How is it possible to have a civil war?

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

1. You are out of control

2. Endless love

3. Take from the rich, give to the poor

'TRUE FACTS'

Seventeen million men alive today are descended from the Mongol marauder Genghis Khan. This is due not only to Khan's reportedly robust appetites, but also to the way humanity has exponentially grown, according to Karen Farrington, author of "The Lore of Averages."

When Khan lived (1162-1227), there were still relatively few people on the planet, about 300,000. Humans didn't hit the billion mark until 1802, and it took another 125 years to double that figure. But population growth during the 20th century mushroomed. The 3 billion mark was set in 1961; 4 billion in 1971; 5 billion in 1986. There are now an estimated 6.7 billion people in the world - three more added every second. It's projected humanity will hit 7 billion by 2010.

By crunching the numbers, Farrington says it works out that 0.5 percent of all men alive today - 1 in 200 - are Khan descendants.

STREET-SMART ANTS

Not that we're suggesting transit workers follow suit, but researchers at the University of Bristol in England have published a paper revealing how some of the best highway builders in the world ply their trade.

Certain species of army ants in the rain forests of Central and South America conduct spectacular predatory raids involving upwards of 200,000 foraging individuals. In doing so, they blaze temporary trails through the forest.

After finding food, the ants are keen to get back to the nest as quickly as possible. To speed their return, some of the ants use their bodies to plug potholes in the trail, flattening the surface so that other ants laden with food can move at maximum speed.

"I think every road user who has ever inwardly cursed as their vehicle bounced across a pothole - jarring every bone in their body - will identify with this story," said Nigel Franks, co-author of the study with Scott Powell. "When it comes to rapid road repairs, the ants have their own do-it-yourself highways agency."

Filling holes in the route is both an individual and a collective effort, the researchers said. For small holes, a single ant sometimes suffices. For larger holes, several ants climb down to fill it.

After their comrades had passed over, the pothole ants crawl out and scurry after them.

PRIME NUMBERS

21 - Average life cycle in days, from egg to adult, of a cat ear mite.

8 - Number of gallons of water that could be brought to a boil using heat generated by an average adult each day.

236 - Current number of known exoplanets (outside our solar system) in the universe.

Sources: Robert A. Lopez, *Annals of Improbable Research*; "The Ultimate Book of Useless Information" by Noel Botham (2007); Geoff Marcy, UC Berkeley

WHAT IS IT? ANSWER

Ear mites are a common pest of cats, causing inflammation, skin disease and even deafness if not treated. Unlike some mites, cat ear mites do not burrow into the skin, but reside within the ear canal.

Copley News Service

Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee