

by Scott_LaFee

VERBATIM

VERBATIM - What happens if a big asteroid hits Earth? Judging from realistic simulations involving a sledge hammer and a common laboratory frog, we can assume it will be pretty bad. -- David Barry, Humorist. CNS Photo. WHAT IS IT? - A leaf of the common sundew plant. CNS Photo. NOW, IF ONLY HE'D SHAVE - ABC reportedly will soon begin airing a comedy series based on the cavemen in the Geico insurance commercials. CNS Photo. 'TRUE FACTS' - Termites reportedly become frantic and eat through wood at a faster pace when exposed to loud music. CNS Photo. "What happens if a big asteroid hits Earth? Judging from realistic simulations involving a sledgehammer and a common laboratory frog, we can assume it will be pretty bad."

- David Barry, Humorist

BRAIN SWEAT

Can you translate these word puzzles? They're common phrases.

1. STEP PETS PETS

2. cHIMp

3. (plus)'

PRIME NUMBERS

On the 23rd day of August, we noted:

- There are at least 23 towns and cities in the United States called Moscow.

- There are 23 tenses in the Santali language of India.

- Roughly 23 percent of the world's tangerines are produced in Japan.

Source: "The Book Of Numbers" by William Hartston (2000)

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

1. One step forward, two steps back

2. Making a monkey out of him

3. Accentuate the positive

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

In India, a single sneeze was once considered bad luck, but multiple sneezes were a good thing. Someone sneezing to your front or right meant bad luck, but sneezes from behind or the left were good.

If someone sneezed while sowing seeds or applying medicine, it was a sign of future success. The sneeze of a quadruped or someone carrying instruments of torture was considered to be very bad luck.

PATENTLY ABSURD

Human car wash

Even if you're just standing there, you always face a risk of slipping and falling while you shower. This is particularly true in hospitals. The inventors of the human car wash, patented in 1969, proposed avoiding such dangers by strapping washees into a hanging harness, then moving them along a conveyor belt through a series of stations: rinse, soapy wash, rinse, blow dry.

WHAT IS IT? ANSWER

A leaf of the common sundew plant. Like the better known Venus' flytrap and the pitcher plant, sundews derive nourishment from consuming insects.

The leaves of the plant are festooned with sticky hairs coated with an odorous, insect-attracting liquid. When an insect lands on a leaf and gets stuck on one of the hairs, the hair wraps around it and covers the bug with digestive juices, and the insect dies and is digested.

NOW, IF ONLY HE'D SHAVE

The television network ABC reportedly will soon begin airing a comedy series based upon the cavemen in the Geico insurance commercials. No doubt TV executives (and makeup artists) thought long and hard about their stars' appearance. What, exactly, constitutes a good-looking cave man?

The answer, according to paleontologists at the Natural History Museum in New York City, is a large jaw, flaring cheeks and big eyebrows. According to the researchers, who published their findings this month in the online journal PLoS ONE, human males have evolved shorter faces between the brow and upper lip to emphasize those particular facial traits.

At puberty, the region between the mouth and eyebrows, known as upper facial height, develops differently in men and women. This difference cannot be explained simply in terms of men being bigger than women, as it can with other facial features, the researchers said. Despite their larger size, men have an upper face similar in height to a female face, but much broader. These differences can be found throughout human history.

The likely explanation, said museum paleontologist Eleanor Weston, is that cave women found shorter, broader male faces to be more attractive and thus tended to choose mates with those features.

JUST ASKING

What is the speed of dark?

'TRUE FACTS'

Termites reportedly become frantic and eat through wood at a faster pace when exposed to loud music.

DARK THOUGHTS

In 1987, someone with a lot of time on his hands noticed that an awful lot of computer hackers and slackers on the Internet seemed to be named "Eric." In that moment, the so-called "Eric Conspiracy" was born.

We're not sure exactly what the agenda of the "Eric Conspiracy" is, though they do have a Web site. (See Eric Conspiracy Secret Labs: catb.org/~esr/ecsl/). But we did find this bit of information to ponder:

"There is no light. The sun sucks dark. In fact, it sucks dark so hard that the friction of the dark moving to the

sun causes the sun to be very hot. The flow of dark toward the sun interrupted by the Earth causes the side of the Earth away from the sun to accumulate dark, thus causing Night. As the Earth rotates, the dark caught on the night side can then be pulled off, this causing the absence of dark known as Day.

"What we call light bulbs are truly dark suckers as well. That is why light bulbs are hot, just like the sun. When a light bulb is full of dark and won't suck dark anymore, it cools off. If you look in old light bulbs, you can even see the accumulation of dark.

"Dark is also heavier than water. This can be seen in the oceans, where the deeper you go, the darker it gets."

Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee