



Good News

SHOW YOUR HEART SOME LOVE

February is Healthy Heart Month



Want your group to bond? Sing together

In these days of political and social controversies, just talking with friends and family can be problematic. But if you sing with them, you might be on to something.

Recent research shows that singing with a group brings people together, improves health, confers a sense of well-being, and triggers bonding.

In fact, in a 2015 study at the University of Oxford, researchers found that strangers who sang with each other for an hour emerged with an unusually close bond. It's especially enjoyable for mixed groups of males and females, since their voices are on average an octave apart.

Researchers have found health benefits too. Singing together reduces heart rate, blood pressure and stress hormones. Some early studies have found that singing may also improve lung health.

LockBit: The godfather of cybercrime

Forget the old hacker stereotypes -- the computer nerd in the basement or the international spy with an ambiguous accent. The most powerful cybercrime gang in the world, LockBit, operates like a cross between a Mafia family and a modern corporation, with an administrative staff and customer service. And business -- the digital extortion business, that is -- has never been better.

The LockBit ransomware strain, first identified in September of 2019, was responsible for more ransomware and digital extortion attacks than any other group in both 2022 and 2023, according to Infosecurity Magazine. Originally known as the ".abcd virus," LockBit is designed to infect all systems on a network, steal data, block user access to system files, and deliver ransom notes with payment instructions and blackmail threats, according to cybersecurity firm Kaspersky.

LockBit is one of many ransomware operators who rely on the Ransomware-as-a-Service (RaaS) affiliate model, selling its services to cybercriminals in exchange for a cut of the profits, according to ZDNET. Customers, called affiliates, pay an initial deposit and gain access to a central control panel where they can customize their ransomware, track victims, and review performance statistics. The control panel even makes it easier to follow through on blackmail threats -- affiliates can use the blogging feature to leak stolen data to the rest of the Lockbit cybercrime family.

Little is known about the core LockBit gang, which claims to be based in the Netherlands. Jon DiMaggio, chief security strategist for threat intelligence group Analyst1, told Wired Magazine that he believes the group is really based in Russia. The leader, known only as LockBitSupp, has also claimed to live in the U.S. and China at various times, and to co-own two restaurants in New York City. At least two more trusted affiliates are thought to support LockBitSupp behind the scenes.

While LockBit bills itself as a Robin Hood-style gang and technically forbids attacks against critical infrastructure, those standards appear to be flexible. During the past two years, their affiliates have extorted a children's hospital in Canada, paralyzed several Italian hospitals and leaked patient medical and financial data, and shut down the Royal Mail's international shipments in the U.K. for six weeks. It's a crime spree that would even make Michael Corleone blush.





New swallowable pill can monitor vital signs

You've taken pills to treat lots of ailments, but have you ever popped a pill to check your vital signs?

This might sound like something out of a futuristic sci-fi movie, but it turns out that the future is now. Celero Systems is working on a small swallowable pill that can measure someone's vital signs inside and out.

How does it work? Built-in sensors in the pill can measure the movement of the stomach, which in turn can be used to gather data about breathing patterns. Further, sensors can also monitor micromovements in blood vessels, thus allowing the pill to track cardiovascular activity.

What might such pills be used for? One promising application is diagnosing and understanding sleep apnea. Currently, patients looking to treat sleep apnea must often stay overnight in sleep clinics where medical professionals can monitor them. There are some at-home tests available, but they cost hundreds of dollars and can be difficult to administer. Soon, sleep apnea patients may be able to skip all the hassles and simply swallow a pill.

The pill might also be able to assess and monitor asthma, vagal atrial fibrillation (a cardiac disorder), neuromuscular disorders,

Across

1. Tax prep. expert
4. Yucatán natives
9. Hoard
10. Reproductive cell
11. Not well
12. Like some buckets
13. "You ___ bother!"
15. Archaeologists' finds
19. Drive-in employee
20. Early form of sonar used to detect submarines
23. Small bill
24. Gift recipient
25. Bed-and-breakfast
26. Grassy area
27. No longer working: Abbr.

Down

1. Fine dinnerware
2. Gondolier, e.g.
3. Lace tip
4. Look caused by Cushing's syndrome, sometimes
5. Hindu incarnation
6. Big laugh
7. Pub pint
8. Member of

Chilling Wall

1	2	3		4	5	6	7	8
9				10				
11				12				
13			14					
15						16	17	18
			19					
20	21	22				23		
24						25		
26						27		

Cong.

14. More risky
16. Church singers
17. 1,000 kilograms
18. Tuckered out
20. Magazine revenue source
21. Boar's mate
22. Some trial evidence

T	E	R		D	R	V	A	R	S
N	N	I		E	E	N	O	N	D
E	N	O		C	I	C	S	D	A
P	O	H		R	V	C			
S	T	S		A	F	I	T	I	A
				T	N	D	E	N	
N	E	K		O			L	L	I
E	L	E		O	V	O		H	O
S	A	V		M	A			P	A

The headline is a clue to the answer in the diagonal.

and even drug overdoses, among other things. The pill is especially convenient because patients only need to swallow it and let it work. By contrast, medications and external measurement equipment are often a hassle and patients can forget or fail to follow directions.

Celero System's pill is part of an emerging "ingestibles" industry. Medical technology companies have been developing diagnostic tools and other applications that can be swallowed. This could cut down on the need for invasive procedures, including surgeries and endoscopes.

TECH SUPPORT



"Have you tried turning it off and never using it again?"

Valentine's Day in other Cultures is just as sweet

Japan's celebration of Valentine's Day has a unique twist. On February 14, only women give gifts of chocolate to men. Some of these gifts, known as giri "obligation" chocolates, are given to bosses, male coworkers, and male classmates and friends. Women give special chocolate, called honmei chocolate, to their sweethearts.



Men reciprocate on White Day, March 14. On this day, many men give women chocolates in white boxes. If the recipient is a girlfriend, sometimes a gift of flowers or white lingerie is substituted or added.

White Day is said to have originated when a marshmallow company urged the men to repay their Valentine's gifts with white marshmallows. Originally the day was called Marshmallow Day, but was later evolved to White Day. Candy companies sought to cash in with special white chocolates.

In China, the Night of Sevens is sometimes called Chinese Valentine's Day. Celebrated on the seventh day of the seventh lunar month of the Chinese calendar, it's also referred to as the Festival to Plead for Skills. On this day, young women show off their skills in homemaking and make wishes for a good husband.

The Brazilian equivalent of Valentine's Day is the Day of the Lovers (Dia dos Namorados), celebrated on June 12. It immediately precedes the Feast of Saint Anthony -- also known as the marriage saint.

Quiet luxury reshapes luxury markets

Being rich and famous sometimes means being ostentatious. Think of luxury yachts and flashy fluorescent hypercars.

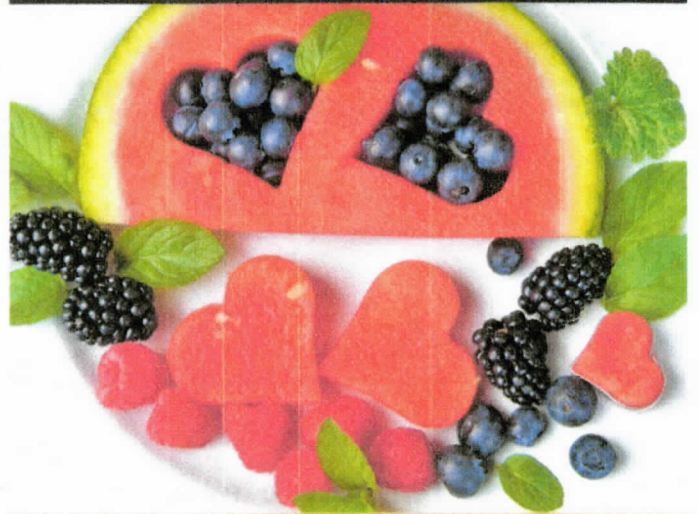
Yet, while many wealthy individuals aren't ready to give up first class everything, a growing number seek to fly under the radar. Sometimes referred to as stealth wealth or quiet luxury, this growing trend may redefine the luxury market operates.

Consider the recently opened 1 Place Vendome hotel set up by Chopard, a luxury jewelry and watchmaker. Rather than massive PR campaign, the hotel opened with barely a whisper. Even the name itself draws little attention, and that's exactly how many of 1 Place Vendome's clients want it. The hotel draws most of its customers in through luxury travel agencies. If you're not staying there, you can't even sip a drink at the bar. Regular rooms start at just over \$1,500 per night.

Even high-end clothing is shifting toward quiet luxury. In the past, luxury brands featured intricate designs and materials. People wearing Gucci wanted everyone to know that they're wearing Gucci. Now, luxury clothiers are crafting understated handbags, pants, sweaters, and more.

Part of the reason may be the proliferation of smartphones. Many wealthy folks prioritize security. They know that lavish displays could make them targets for criminals. Before everyone had cameras, the rich and famous could display their wealth at events then slip back into relative anonymity.

HEALTHY HEART - HEALTHY DIET



February is Heart Month

Five things to know about blood cholesterol

Cholesterol is a fat-like substance made in the liver that aids with critical functions like hormone production and digesting fat. But according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly two in five adults in the U.S. have excessive cholesterol levels, which can increase the risk for cardiovascular disease and other health complications.

1. There are two kinds of cholesterol: the "good" high-density lipoprotein (HDL) and "bad" low-density lipoprotein (LDL). High blood cholesterol usually means too much LDL and not enough HDL.

2. LDL cholesterol, the bad kind, can accumulate in the arteries and narrow the space through which blood can flow. HDL, the good kind, takes LDL cholesterol to be flushed from the body, and may help prevent heart attacks or strokes.

3. The only way to know for sure whether you have high cholesterol is to take a blood test. High LDL cholesterol usually has no symptoms, though people with high cholesterol often have high blood pressure as well. A simple blood test called a lipid panel can measure your lipid levels, and your health care provider can interpret the results according to your age, sex, and health history.

4. Lifestyle factors and your genes can both contribute to high cholesterol. Smoking, stress, excessive alcohol consumption, lack of exercise, and an incomplete or poor diet can all affect your blood cholesterol.

5. Many people can lower their LDL cholesterol and raise their HDL cholesterol with long-term diet and lifestyle changes. Medications may also help. Most physicians recommend a class of drugs called statins as the first-line medication therapy for high cholesterol.



February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	We  Referrals			1	2 Groundhog Day	3
4 Pro Bowl Grammy's	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Super Bowl	12	13 Mardi Gras	14 Lent 	15	16 Bird Count	17 PANGOLIN DAY
18 Daytona 500	19 President's Day	20	21	22 Chili Day	23	24 Snow Moon
25	26	27 Spay Day	28	29 Leap Day		

Hi

Welcome to the first issue of our newsletter. It will be printed each month and be online as well as printed and mailed first class. We hope to give you some interesting articles, puzzles and photos to enjoy. In order to support this newsletter we are offering classified ads. We hope it will help our industry of small businesses.

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20 words \$10 for one issue

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Thanks for reading this issue!
Cass & Colleen

