

## Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday May 4 2025



=====

### Painting with Jupiter



*Image Credit: NASA, JPL-Caltech, SwRI, MSSS; Processing: Rick Lundh*

In digital brush strokes, Jupiter's signature atmospheric bands and vortices were used to form this interplanetary post-impressionist work of art.

The creative image from citizen scientist Rick Lundh uses data from the Juno spacecraft's JunoCam. To paint on the digital canvas, a JunoCam image with contrasting light and dark tones was chosen for processing and an oil-painting software filter applied.

The image data was captured during perijove 10. That was Juno's December 16, 2017 close encounter with the solar system's ruling gas giant. At the time the spacecraft was cruising about 13,000 kilometers above northern Jovian cloud tops.

Now in an extended mission, Juno has explored Jupiter and its moons since entering orbit around Jupiter in July of 2016.

=====

## Chords & Riffs

### Chubby Checker Inducted into Rock & Roll Hall of Fame



*Skylon.com*

Chubby Checker harnessed the explosion of youth culture in rock & roll's early years, combining the power of records, radio, television, and movies to engage a worldwide audience. The undisputed king of 1960s rock & roll dance crazes, Chubby Checker inspired millions to shake it all night long to hits like "The Twist," "The Fly," "The Hucklebuck," "The Pony," and "Limbo Rock."

Born Ernest Evans in Spring Gully, South Carolina, his family soon moved to Philadelphia where he began singing vocal harmony on the street corner and learning piano at the Settlement Music School. He had an amazing ability to mimic the vocal styles of other singers – a skill that earned him his first single, "The Class," where he imitated the sounds of Fats Domino, the Coasters, and Elvis Presley. The song caught the attention of American Bandstand host Dick Clark, whose wife Barbara was so impressed by Evans' Fats Domino impression that she suggested the similarly styled stage name Chubby Checker.

Checker signed to the legendary Cameo-Parkway label and recorded a version of Hank Ballard and the Midnighters' 1958 B side "The Twist." The song became a hit and a massive cultural phenomenon. On August 6, 1960, Checker appeared for the first time on American Bandstand, unleashing the dance move that would soon sweep the nation – and the crowd went wild. The song hit Number One in 1960 and again in 1961, earning it the title of Billboard's most successful single of all time. From Main Street to the White House, suddenly everyone was doing "The Twist."

Checker charted 32 hits between 1960 and 1966, starring in two films – 1961's *Twist Around the Clock* and 1962's *Don't Knock the Twist* – that showcased his fluid dance moves and ability to inspire others to dance. He experimented in later years with folk

music, psychedelic rock, and disco. In 1988, the hip-hop group Fat Boys returned Checker to the Top Forty by recording a rap version of "The Twist."

\*\*\*

The Twist <https://youtu.be/im9XuJJXylw>

Let's Twist Again [https://youtu.be/eh8eb\\_ACLl8?list=RDEMD-ApHkKUc44-zEIOKVbK\\_Q](https://youtu.be/eh8eb_ACLl8?list=RDEMD-ApHkKUc44-zEIOKVbK_Q)

Chubby Checker Concert - March 8, 2023 <https://youtu.be/4eNLtTwYXXY?t=14>

Pony Time <https://youtu.be/JyaxcvHSyZY>

*I mean if this isn't Hall of Fame stuff, what is?*

=====

**Jester's Cap**



*Joe Horton suggests my CarQual storytelling is a little obscure.*

"Two Four Six, your signal is Bingo," Pri Fly calls, telling you you've fulfilled that which distinguishes aviators from pilots. "It should be more," you think as you begin to adjust to the situation, and while you ponder that in something of a dream state, you hear, "Pigeons to Homeplate two-six-five degrees for sixty-two miles."

Apart from part of the first sentence, I don't know what any of that means....

*Well Joe, after all the build up, the CarQual itself seemed almost anticlimactic... over and done with way too soon. The first clue I had I had completed the task was the call directing me to head back to the base (Bingo), followed by the course and distance (pigeons) to do so.*

=====



=====

## How Do You Re-Home a Rhino By Helicopter? Upside Down

*Moving endangered rhinos to new areas is a vital part of their conservation. War-torn helicopters from the Vietnam war are airlifting the creatures to safety.*



*Transporting rhinos by helicopter is faster and less stressful for the animal than other methods  
(Credit: Namibian Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism)*

WWF's Black Rhino Range Expansion Project has 18 project sites, with over 400 black rhinos spread across the site, making up 15% of all black rhinos in South Africa, says Rusch. "Really none of this would be possible without helicopters, both in terms of darting and transferring rhinos out of inaccessible areas," she says.

<https://bit.ly/3FJGdTd>

=====

## **X-59 'Quiet' Supersonic Jet Aces Key 'Cruise Control' Test**

*NASA's new X-59 supersonic jet is a step closer to flight after passing an important ground test in March. Known as "engine speed hold," the test ensured that the X-59 can maintain a specific speed when it flies for the first time later this year.*



*(Lockheed Martin Corporation/Gary Tice)*

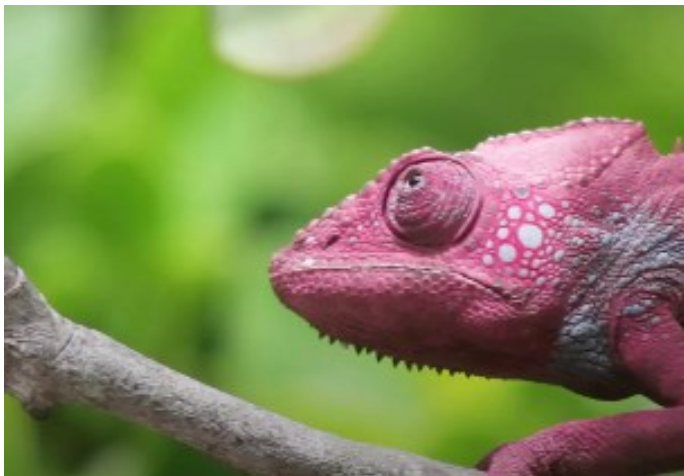
NASA's new [X-59](#) supersonic jet is a step closer to flight after passing an important ground test in March.

This latest test confirmed that the X-59 can cruise at a precise speed, which frees up the pilot to do other work during the flight. NASA said that cruising speed is also important for pilot safety.

<https://bit.ly/3Rvfts1>

=====

## **Watch as a Chameleon Changes Colors in Real Time**



*Now transformed into a bright fuchsia.*

*Moss & Fog*



In a high-definition video, we see a timid, wild chameleon in Madagascar inch along a branch.

As it does so, its body shifts from orange to fuchsia to green to yellow to bright blue and back again, all so quickly it feels instantaneous.

<https://bit.ly/3RZfQeF>

=====

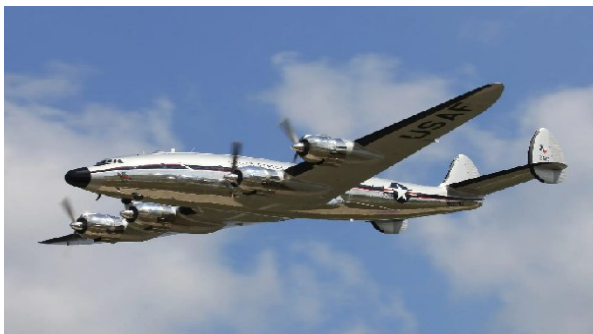
The father of this little girl says he brought her a cat to forget about the phone, but this is what happened.



=====

## Historic Triple-Tail 'Connie' To Return To AirVenture

*Aircraft served during the Berlin Airlift and later as Gen. McArthur's personal transport.*



*Credit: EAA*

The Experimental Aircraft Association (EAA) has confirmed the Air Legends Foundation of San Antonio, Texas, will bring its Lockheed C-121A Constellation to AirVenture this year, reprising a 2023 visit. The 72nd running of the [AirVenture event](#) will take place at Wittman Regional Airport in Oshkosh, Wisconsin, July 21-27. The "Connie," wearing military livery, will be on display at Boeing Plaza.

Nicknamed Bataan, the triple-tail, four-engine transport entered service with the U.S. Air Force in January 1949 as part of the Military Air Transport Service (MATS). The aircraft flew supplies during the legendary Berlin Airlift, when U.S. aircraft countered the Soviet surface blockade that threatened to starve out Western allies' presence in the German capital city. After this service, Bataan was repurposed for VIP transport and served during the Korean War as the personal transport for Gen. Douglas MacArthur, who gave it its nickname.

Rick Larsen, EAA's vice president of communities and member programs, said, "The rarity of flying Lockheed Constellations, along with its unforgettable triple-tail design, makes this aircraft a favorite whenever it appears at Oshkosh. We appreciate the work of the Air Legends Foundation to bring this 'Connie' back to flying status and bring it to EAA AirVenture."

*Mark Phelps for AVWeb*

=====

## **Your Skin Is Breathing. This New Wearable Device Can Measure It.**

*First wearable device to gauge health by sensing gases coming from, going into skin*



*Measuring just two centimeters long and one-and-a-half centimeters wide, the device comprises a chamber, a collection of sensors, a programmable valve, an electronic circuit and a small rechargeable battery. Instead of touching the skin directly, the chamber hovers a few millimeters above it.*

*Image courtesy of John Rogers*

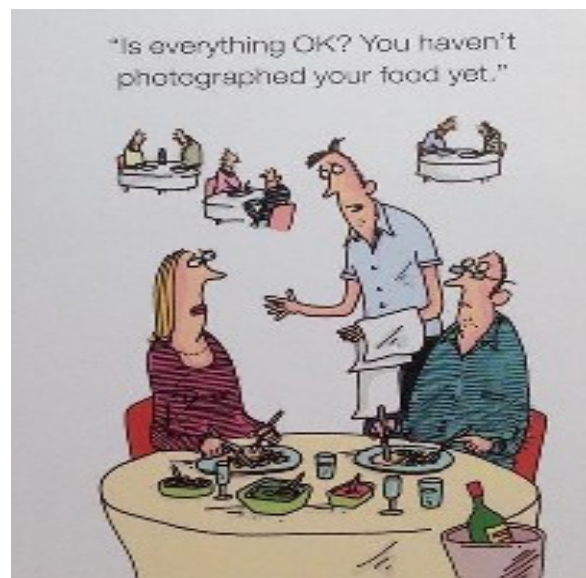
By analyzing these gases, the device offers an entirely new way to assess skin health, including monitoring wounds, detecting skin infections, tracking hydration levels, quantifying exposure to harmful environmental chemicals and more.

The new technology comprises a collection of sensors that precisely measure changes in temperature, water vapor, carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which each give valuable insight into various skin conditions and overall health. These gases flow into a small chamber within the device that hovers above the skin without actually touching it. This no-contact design is particularly useful for gathering information about fragile skin without disturbing delicate tissues.

The study, published in the journal [Nature](#), demonstrates the device's efficacy across small animals and humans.

<https://bit.ly/4j47kHp>

=====



=====

## **Cloaked Human Neural Grafts Evade Immune Detection**

*Florey researchers have engineered a way to fool the immune system into accepting neural grafts as part of the body, rather than attacking them as foreign objects.*

*Professor Clare Parish*





Florey researchers have engineered a neural graft that flies under the immune system's radar and evades rejection.

Neural grafts are a realistic future treatment for many neurological disorders and for Parkinson's disease patients this is coming close to reality, with at least 3 major clinical trials in progress.

The technology is the next generation in neurological treatment but could have applications for a range of other kinds of transplants.

The research, published in [Cell Stem Cell](#), could signal an end to the reliance on drugs necessary to prevent graft rejection, not just for Parkinson's disease neural grafts, but for other cell transplants.

The study's lead author, Florey Deputy Director Professor Clare Parish, Head of Stem Cells and Neural Development, said Parkinson's disease is a neurodegenerative condition that affects an estimated 10 million people globally and 150,000 people in Australia.\*

"Parkinson's disease causes specific nerve cells – neurons – to die, leading to symptoms that include difficulties moving, tremor, stiffness, and impaired balance. Neural grafting is an emerging treatment to replace those dead neurons," Professor Parish said.

<https://bit.ly/4czCGmO>

=====

## What Marine Corps Aviation Has in Store Over the Next Five Years



*tacticalgeartech.com*

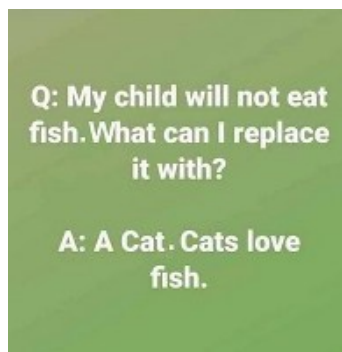
Over the next five years Marine aviators should see more F-35s, an upgraded MV-22 Osprey fleet, a larger fleet of cargo aircraft and data-enabled predictive aircraft maintenance.

That's the vision Deputy Commandant for Aviation Lt. Gen. Bradford Gering shared Tuesday at the Navy League's annual Sea-Air-Space Exposition.

In its [aviation plan](#), released in January, the Corps provided more details on its airborne assets.

<https://bit.ly/3RKuGWd>

=====



=====

## Humanlike Robot With Bionic Muscles

*Clone Robotics' Protoclone android can be seen flexing its bionic muscles in a new video, creepily jerking its limbs back and forth as it hangs from the ceiling.*



*tribute.com.pk*

Engineers at Clone Robotics, a startup founded in Poland in 2021, are building androids that look more humanlike than any other humanoid robot built to date and mimic human movement.

The new video, released by the company on April 9, shows their translucent-white skinned "Protoclone" robot hanging from the ceiling with its legs in a pli  position, while its arms, head, and hands move eerily. The robot can be seen jerking around like a marionette, shrugging its shoulders, flexing its hands into fists, moving its arms up and down, and nodding its head.

<https://bit.ly/4jt6weK>

=====

## Meet the Winners of the 2025 Sony World Photography Awards



*From the series 'Anthropocene Illusion' by Zed Nelson, UK, Photographer of the Year, Professional competition, Wildlife & Nature, Sony World Photography Awards 2025*

The Sony World Photography Awards have unveiled the winners of their prestigious competition, now in its 18th year - shining a spotlight on the world's most powerful, thought-provoking, and visually arresting images of the past year.

At a ceremony in London, British photographer Zed Nelson was named Photographer of the Year for his haunting and deeply timely series *The Anthropocene Illusion*, which explores humanity's fractured relationship with nature. From safari parks to synthetic green spaces, Nelson's images reveal a world where the wild is staged and the natural is anything but.

The evening also celebrated the winners across the Professional, Open, Student, and Youth competitions - alongside a special tribute to legendary documentary photographer Susan Meiselas, this year's recipient of the Outstanding Contribution to Photography award.

<https://bit.ly/44uXLfW>

=====

## **Stem Cells to Treat Parkinson's? Two Small Studies Hint at Success**



*Two new studies suggest that stem-cell treatments may be getting closer to becoming widely available for Parkinson's patients.*

*pocketlight/iStockphoto/Getty Images*

In a pair of small studies designed primarily to test safety, two teams of researchers found that stem cells transplanted into the brains of Parkinson's patients began producing the chemical messenger dopamine and appeared to ease symptoms like tremor, researchers reported in the journal *Nature*.

The results indicate that "now we have the potential to really, really halt this disease in its tracks," says Dr. Mya Schiess, a neurology professor at UTHealth Houston who was not involved in either study.

The Food and Drug Administration has cleared one of the stem-cell treatments for a Phase 3 study, the last hurdle before approval.

<https://bit.ly/44wnjt6>

=====

## **Nothing Quite Like a Pitching Deck at Night With No Divert Base**



*fightersweep.com*

<https://youtu.be/SoPBLldzjNA>

*I give daily thanks I never got to experience anything near like this.*

=====

**My wife took up gardening...  
I wonder what she's going to plant**



=====

## **Dracula Parrot's Piercing Screams Echo Through New Guinea Forests**

*Pesquet's parrot, also known as a Dracula parrot, resembles a vulture and has a distinct scream — but its favorite food is figs.*



*Pesquet's parrot is more commonly called the Dracula parrot, in part because of its striking*



*plumage.*

*(Image credit: Iggino Van Bael via Alamy)*

The Pesquet's parrot is more famously known as the Dracula parrot — and with its mix of jet-black and blood-red feathers, it's easy to see why. They also sound terrifying, as their piercing screams echo through the rainforests of New Guinea.

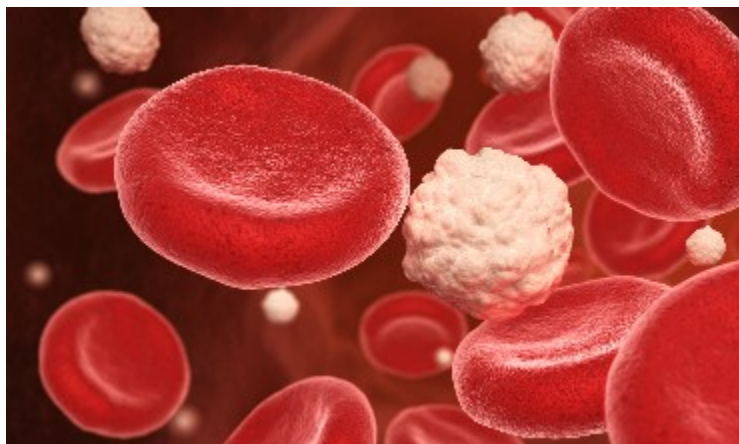
Dracula parrots grow to around 18 inches (46 centimeters) long and weigh between 1.3 and 1.8 lbs (600 and 800 grams). They can live for around 20 to 40 years. Their plumage is mostly black and dark grey, but they sport red feathers around the belly, tail and wings. Adult males have red patches behind their eyes, which distinguishes them from females.

<https://bit.ly/4jIKhYC>

=====

## **Glucose's Role As Master Manipulator of Tissue Maturation**

*The discovery has implications for the treatment of diabetes and cancers.*



*Getty Images*

The sugar glucose, which is the main source of energy in almost every living cell, has been revealed to also be a master regulator of tissue differentiation – the process by which stem cells give rise to specialized cells that make up all the body's tissues.

It does so not by being catabolized, or broken down, to release the energy sequestered in its chemical bonds, but instead by binding in its intact form to proteins that control which genes in the genome are made into proteins and when.

The discovery of glucose's undercover double life was so surprising the researchers spent several years confirming their findings before publishing their results.

Understanding this new role for glucose has implications for the treatment of diabetes,

in which blood sugar levels are elevated, and cancers, which are often made up largely of undifferentiated cells.

<https://bit.ly/4jFYS0z>

=====

## **The Crumpled Mountains at the Intersection of Asia and Europe**

*Iran's folded rocks are a colorful formation that is part of the Greater Caucasus mountains, which formed when the Eurasian tectonic plate collided with the Arabian plate millions of years ago.*



*Iran's folded rocks are millions of years old, having formed when the Eurasian and Arabian tectonic plates collided. Satellite image from 2023.*

*(Image credit: NASA Earth Observatory)*

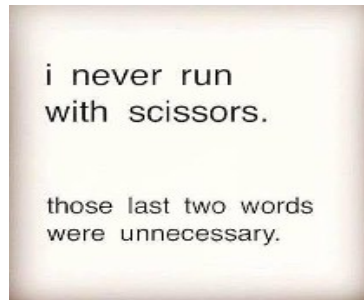
Iran's folded rocks are rugged mountain ridges and valleys to the southwest of the Caspian Sea. They are an extension of the Greater Caucasus mountain belt, which also stretches along Russia's border with Georgia and Azerbaijan.

The rocks are formed of countless sedimentary layers, which were upturned and creased into the landscape we see today during the initial collision between the Arabian and Eurasian [tectonic plates](#).

"A tectonic collision between Eurasia and Arabia over millions of years compressed these colorful rock layers, bending them into large folds," NASA officials wrote on the social platform X in January 2024.

<https://bit.ly/3ErCeua>

=====



=====

## **Link Between Shingles Vaccine and Lower Dementia Risk**

*A new analysis of a vaccination program in Wales found that the shingles vaccine appeared to lower new dementia diagnoses by 20% — more than any other known intervention.*



*Getty Image*

In a new study led by Stanford Medicine, researchers analyzing the health records of Welsh older adults discovered that those who received the shingles vaccine were 20% less likely to develop dementia over the next seven years than those who did not receive the vaccine.

The remarkable findings, published April 2 in *Nature*, support an emerging theory that viruses that affect the nervous system can increase the risk of dementia. If further confirmed, the new findings suggest that a preventive intervention for dementia is already close at hand.

<https://bit.ly/3RZgCs2>

=====

## Study Links Tech Use to Reduced Dementia Risk in Older Adults

Rudzhan Nagiev/ iStock



Facebook enthusiasts, “grandfluencers,” and all tech-savvy seniors, you may want to share this [recent study](#) with your group chat: Researchers [found](#) that frequent use of digital technology might help stave off cognitive decline in older adults.

After reviewing 57 studies involving more than 411,000 older adults, researchers found that consistent use of

technology — e.g. smartphones, computers, email, and social media — was associated with a 42% lower risk of mild cognitive impairment or dementia. The study results challenge the “digital dementia” hypothesis, which suggests reliance on tech can weaken cognitive abilities in the long run.

But this isn’t to say there’s no such thing as too much screen time: “Our findings are not a blanket endorsement of mindless scrolling,” co-lead author Jared Benge told CNN. “They are instead a hint that the generation that gave us the internet has found ways to get some net positive benefits from these tools to the brain.”

=====



=====

## Annual Beautiful Bulldog Contest Names Its Wrinkly 2025 Winner

*Milo the bulldog, 7, will serve a year-long reign as the Drake Relays mascot for Drake University after his win at the 2025 contest*



*Milo during his win at Drake University's Beautiful Bulldog Contest.*

*Photo: Drake University*

Iowa's Drake University, home of the Drake Bulldogs sports teams, announced the winner of its 46th Annual Beautiful Bulldog Contest on Monday, April 21. The winner is Milo, a 7-year-old bulldog from North Liberty, Iowa.

The bulldog stole the show, beating out nearly 30 English bulldog contestants from Illinois, Iowa, and Nebraska, arriving on stage dressed as a Drake Bulldogs soccer player. The pup wore shin guards and sported the university's iconic blue and white jersey with tennis shoes on his hind legs. He even had a blue and white soccer ball to play with.

<https://bit.ly/42JcJwh>

=====

## Our War on Pests May Actually Be Helping Ticks Spread



*Ticks like this one get more cold-resistant when exposed to sublethal doses of pesticides.*  
*Jerry Kirkhart via Wikimedia Commons | CC BY*

Pesticides have become everyday weapons in the wars we wage against pests, so they've become commonplace in the environment. Scientists are still trying to figure out how these chemicals affect off-target species, even when they're not exposed to lethal amounts. Such work has revealed that some pesticides can alter the social behaviors of



bees, for example. But in a new study, researchers uncovered a very unexpected effect: Pesticides help ticks tolerate chilly weather.

Ticks have been expanding northward, which has generally been attributed to warmer conditions brought on by climate change. Yet the animals' ranges have been outpacing those climatic changes, and the new findings may help explain why. "Given the overall increase in general pesticide use throughout the world, this effect could explain the relatively rapid northward invasion of ticks beyond what is predicted by models alone," the team posits. By incorporating this new intel into predictive models, researchers will probably get a better sense of where ticks may be in the future, allowing for better planning for the diseases that spread with them.

<https://bit.ly/3Gt8hdN>

=====

## **Taking the Bite Out of Lyme Disease**

*New studies offer insight into disease's treatment, lingering symptoms*



*Northwestern scientists have identified an antibiotic that cures Lyme disease at a fraction of the dosage of the current "gold standard" treatment and discovered what may cause a treated infection to mimic chronic illness in patients.*

*Feinberg School of Medicine*

Lyme disease, a disease transmitted when deer ticks feed on infected animals like deer and rodents, and then bite humans, impacts nearly half a million individuals in the U.S. annually. Lyme can be devastating; but early treatment with antibiotics can prevent chronic symptoms like heart and neurological problems and arthritis from developing.

The antibiotic doxycycline is the current gold standard treatment for Lyme. However, doxycycline and other generic antibiotics, wreak havoc on the microbiome, killing beneficial bacteria in the gut and causing troubling side effects even as it kills *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacteria that causes Lyme.

Northwestern scientists identified that piperacillin, an antibiotic in the same class as penicillin, effectively cured mice of Lyme disease at 100-times less than the effective

dose of doxycycline. At such a low dose, piperacillin also had the added benefit of "having virtually no impact on resident gut microbes," according to the study.

<https://bit.ly/42R0ONc>

=====

- ❖ I told my wife that I wanted to be cremated. She made an appointment for Tuesday.
- ❖ I ordered a book off the internet called "How to Scam People" - it's been three months now and it still hasn't arrived.
- ❖ When my wife and I argue, I always get the last word. They're usually, "I'm sorry. You're right."
- ❖ Someone offered me grapes, but I declined .... I don't consume wine in pill form.
- ❖ This getting old is a terrible thing. I blacked out for 20 minutes this morning, then I realized I'd put my hoodie on backwards.
- ❖ The longer my wife and I are married, the more annoying she says I am, and the more crime TV she's watching. Those two can't be related.
- ❖ Did you know that if you garden in your backyard naked, your neighbors will build you a privacy fence at absolutely no cost to you?
- ❖ Never use a GPS when going to a cemetery. It's not nice to hear, "You've reached your destination."
- ❖ That awkward moment when you're running, and your boobs are bouncing all over the place, and you're a 55 year old guy.

=====

## **These Large, Snake-Like Fish Are Invading the United States**

*Invasive northern snakeheads can "walk" on land, breathe air and survive out of water for several days, and they also compete with native species in waterways*



Otlibrary.com

Originally hailing from Asia, the northern snakehead (*Channa argus*) has been proliferating throughout the United States for the last two decades. They have sharp teeth and scales that are similar in coloring and pattern to pythons.

Snakeheads were previously sold in pet stores, live fish markets and some restaurants. Some “aquarium hobbyists” or snakehead connoisseurs may have released them in hopes of establishing a local source of food, per the U.S. Geological Survey.

But those fish—let into the wild outside their native habitat—have become problematic. They are “aggressive predators,” according to the Missouri Department of Conservation’s recent alert to residents. They can reproduce and grow rapidly, crowding out native species by gobbling up small fish, crustaceans and other critters. This could make them a threat to commercial and recreational fishing.

<https://bit.ly/3RYyGCB>

=====

## **Caltrans Deploys Remote Control Cat D8 Dozers**

*Remote control earthmoving equipment aids Regent's Slide cleanup.*



A D8 crawler dozer like this one uses Cat Command, enabling Caltrans to operate machines with remote control.

Caterpillar

Caltrans has a pair of big, new remote-control tools in its road-repair kit, and they’re being used for the first time as the agency works to clear a stubborn landslide that closed Highway 1 near Big Sur.

Workers are now operating two remote-controlled D-8 Caterpillar [dozers] at the Regent’s Slide site on Big Sur, according to a release the agency sent out Thursday.

The innovative new technology, designed in conjunction with Caterpillar Inc. and other contracting partners, "is intended to increase production and protect worker safety at Regent's," Caltrans said in the release.

<https://bit.ly/3YHelp7>

=====

## FLASHMOB CENTRAL

### Budapest, Zoltán Kodály Evening song



*[dailynewshungary.com](http://dailynewshungary.com)*

<https://youtu.be/b055cHvLgtk>

=====



=====

## The First 3D Printed Starbucks Opening for Business



*Designed exclusively for drive-thru and mobile orders, the futuristic café is all about speed and sustainability. With no drywall or beams, the minimalist design showcases the potential of 3D printing in commercial architecture.*

*moss&fog*

Opening April 28, this 1,400-square-foot store ditches the traditional brick-and-mortar for a sleek, concrete structure printed layer by layer by German firm PERI 3D Construction.

While Starbucks 3D printed a bar in its Shanghai store way back in 2017, this is the first time the entire store has been 3D printed.

<https://mossandfog.com/the-first-3d-printed-starbucks-opening-for-business/>

=====

## Uber, Volkswagen Pair Up to Launch Robotaxi Service I n US

*The companies expect to launch a commercial service in Los Angeles, the first city on the list, by late 2026. VW and Uber didn't provide details on potential future markets.*



*Image Credits: VW/Uber*



Initially, the service won't be driverless. The fleet of autonomous vehicles will have human safety operators behind the wheel before they go driverless in 2027, a VW spokesperson told TechCrunch.

That gives Volkswagen ADMT, the autonomous vehicle subsidiary of Volkswagen of America, up to two years to navigate the regulatory landscape in California and gain the permits required to test its autonomous vehicles and eventually operate a commercial service.

<https://bit.ly/4cKHCVO>

=====

## **A Walking Tour of London's Roman Origins**

*An entire Roman City is hidden beneath London*



*urbansaunters.com*

Before London, there was Londinium, the capital of Roman Britain, and although it was abandoned by AD 450, the influence and some remnants of the ancient city still remain.

[https://youtu.be/j\\_-JnvuAeVI](https://youtu.be/j_-JnvuAeVI)

=====

## **10-Minute Driving Time From Denmark to Germany?**

*That's the promise of the world's longest submerged tunnel.*



*Fehmern A/S*

If you thought driving in Los Angeles was inefficient, this route between two European cities takes the cake: As the crow flies, the Danish town of Rødbyhavn is only about 13 miles away from the German village of Puttgarden — but actually driving from one to the other would set you back five and a half hours.

Thankfully, the world's longest immersed tunnel is set to significantly improve that. The Fehmarnbelt tunnel, expected to be completed in 2029, will carve two double-lane highways and two electric rail lines beneath the Baltic Sea, which separates Rødbyhavn and Puttgarden. Currently, the shortest route between the towns involves a 45-minute ferry ride, but the new tunnel will cut travel time down to a mere 10 minutes by car and seven by train.

<https://bit.ly/42EoLao>

=====

## **What's Happened in the 40 Years Since Chernobyl's Meltdown?**

*Well how about the area becoming one of Europe's biggest nature reserves*



*Getty images*

On April 26, 1986, the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant's reactor No. 4 caught fire and exploded, releasing at least 5% of the radioactive reactor core into the environment, per the World Nuclear Association. Yet the Red Forest in Ukraine, about 94 miles north of Kyiv, is teeming with life. Wild horses, brown bears, wolves, Eurasian lynx, and other animals roam the lush land lined with more than 1,200 plant species. It's hard to imagine that this is the site of the worst nuclear accident in history.

Today, while ground zero is entombed in a massive sarcophagus — sealing the disaster site for a century — its surroundings have transformed into mainland Europe's third-largest nature reserve, home to thousands of plants and animals. Due to restrictions, few people have entered the 2,800 square-kilometer area — known as the Chernobyl Exclusion Zone, or CEZ — over the past four decades, making it a testament to Earth's ability to heal when unencumbered by humans.

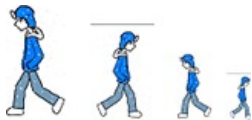
<https://bit.ly/3GpjFr2>

=====

**Why don't the  
99% of us who  
aren't  
offended by  
everything  
quit catering  
to the 1% who  
are**

=====

## **My Walking Thoughts**



**For Sunday May 4 2025**

=====

Not that you should care, but over the last four months my thinking's shown more flaws than normal, a calamity I've tied with having to content myself with stumbling along over very short distances, the result of (yuck) age-related lower back problems.

Happily that worm has turned in the wake of a successful steroid infusion, and regardless of my continuing questionable cerebral accomplishments, I've returned to the point where I can let my mind wander down paths separate from those of my feet... in short, life is good again.

My favorite walking venue is nearby Lake Casitas Recreation Area with its miles of walking and hiking trails, a wide variety of wildlife to engage my imagination, and at the moment a nesting bald eagle family whose chicks are on the verge of taking wing.

Yesterday, I happened across a Berliner (Texas) Tortoise and a baby rattler hiding in the brush near the east side perimeter fence. Following this I watched transfixed as a pair of shrieking boys chased a flock of geese hither and yon around a football field-sized grassy picnic area, until finally they tired of the effort. The geese honked for a while indicating their dissatisfaction with the premature ending to the game, leading me to the suspicion that the feathered clan was every bit as invested in the fun as the

hooligans... or maybe it was just my delight in watching such simple pleasures unfold on a sunny afternoon.

Today I'm going to walk the Carpinteria (CA) Bluffs, check on how things are at the harbor seal rookery, watch the parade of brown pelicans practicing their formation flight skills as they patrol the shallows in search of lunch, then wave 'hello' to Amtrak Surf Liner passengers on their way to and from Santa Barbara.

Does this sound like the proper agenda for grown man on a Friday morning? You bet your sweet ass it is.

=====

### **George Nakano: An Outtake from Phantoms from Vietnam**

One week it was Gordon's turn to walk to the Nakano's farm to await the school bus while he and George threw rocks at the crows who joined them in their daily ritual. The next week it would be George's turn to make the trek when their feathered playmates, anticipating the altered venue, reset their place on the fence rails one mile to the west. Gordon's family and George's each owned a section—640 acres—of dry farmland 15 miles south of Bakersfield on the southeastern flank of California's lower San Joaquin Valley.

Gordon and George had engaged in this game for the two years since they started Kindergarten. Now three months into their second grade year where they struggled mightily with reading, spelling, and cursive exercises, their rock-throwing range line had moved 10 yards from the road verge to the south side of the drainage ditch to "give the birds a chance," they agreed. If the crows were aware of this sporting concern, they didn't show it, choosing instead to keep up a steady taunting racket as their part of the event.

Back when they began their daily ritual, the boys played host to perhaps a half-dozen of the cocky black creatures, but month by month the numbers grew until now there might be as many as 60 to egg them on. Once when the boys moved their line back, the birds moved forward decreasing the range, telling them they had outstripped their talents, but generally the birds agreed with their self-assessment. It was better than applause. Better even than getting all their spelling words correct.

Mr. Keller, who drove the school bus, was as much a participant as the boys and birds, knowing where they would be when he arrived to transport them to PS 645, one of county school system's primary school, grades one through eight. This was important because George's farm was a mile closer to the North-South county road than Gordon's, nominally a minute and a half difference in their boarding time. Mr. Keller's internal clock allowed him to time his arrival to allow the boys a full five minutes of rock-

throwing time. If he had a say in the matter, Mr. Keller would have parked the bus and joined in the fun, but the school board would have looked with disfavor on such behavior.