Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday July 7 2024

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Earthrise: A Video Reconstruction

Video Credit: NASA, SVS, Apollo 8 Crew; Lead Animator: Ernie Wright; (USRA);
Music: C Major Prelude by Johann Sebastian Bach

About 12 seconds into this video, something unusual happens. The Earth begins to rise.

Never seen by humans before, the rise of the Earth over the limb of the Moon occurred about 55.5 years ago and surprised and amazed the crew of Apollo 8. The crew immediately scrambled to take still images of the stunning vista caused by Apollo 8's orbit around the Moon.

The featured video is a modern reconstruction of the event as it would have looked were it recorded with a modern movie camera. The colorful orb of our Earth stood out as a familiar icon rising above a distant and unfamiliar moonscape, the whole scene the conceptual reverse of a more familiar moonrise as seen from Earth.

To many, the scene also spoke about the unity of humanity: that big blue marble -- that's us -- we all live there. The two-minute video is not time-lapse -- this is the real speed of the Earth rising through the windows of Apollo 8. Seven months and three missions later, Apollo 11 astronauts would not only circle Earth's moon, but land on it.

https://youtu.be/1R5QqhPq1Ik

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Image of the Moon Made from Over 1,000 Photographs

photographer Andrew McCarthy

The image of our moon, below, was patiently stitched together from 100,000 photos. It's positively beautiful, with a clarity and depth of color that you rarely ever see. The craters positively pop off the screen, and we get a sense of the scale of our orbiting friend.

https://bit.ly/44xJu0b

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Amateur Archaeologists Unearth Mysterious Roman Object

A rare Roman dodecahedron was found in Lincolnshire, England in 2023, and is set to go on display in the Lincoln Museum.
Norton Disney History and Archaeology Group

I may be one of the largest Roman dodecahedrons ever found, but mystery surrounds what it was actually used for.

The 12-sided object is one of just 33 known to exist in Roman Britain, and one of approximately 130 in the world. It is considered "one of archaeology's great enigmas," according to the Norton Disney History and Archaeology Group, an amateur group based in the English region of Lincolnshire where it was found in June.

https://bit.ly/3Qr9Jzz

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Adages and Recognitions for a Sunny Sunday

"On time" is, when you get there.

Even duct tape can't fix stupid – but it sure does muffle the sound.

It would be wonderful if we could put ourselves in the dryer for ten minutes, then come out wrinkle-free...and three sizes smaller.

Lately, you've noticed people your age are so much older than you.

"One for the road" means hitting the head before you leave the house.

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EV Batteries Could Last Much Longer Thanks to New Capacitor

Researchers crack new approach to batteries that could help common electrics last nearly 20 times longer between charges
(Image credit: ktsimages/Getty Images)

It has 19-times higher energy density that scientists created by mistake.

The new discovery — which the scientists say was unintended and builds off novel electronics work — could be the foundation for better battery life across consumer devices such as laptops or smartphones, as well as more flexibility in grid-scale energy storage. The scientists described their findings in a study published April 18 in the journal Science.

https://bit.ly/44Fckf4

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Now There’s 'Quantum-Inspired' Laser Computing

LightSolver's LPU100 is based on "quantum-inspired" technology.
(Image credit: LightSolver)

Engineers have developed an optical computer, about the size of a desktop PC, that can purportedly execute complex artificial intelligence (AI) calculations in nanoseconds, rivaling the performance of both quantum and classical supercomputers.

https://bit.ly/4bITt5f

What’s next, a gazillion megaflops super computer in a Dick Tracy wrist watch?

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Endurance Running May Have Evolved to Help Chase Down Prey

"Pursuit hunting" was sometimes more efficient than stalking, survey of Indigenous hunting methods suggests

Prehistoric people may have successfully chased down their prey more often than researchers had thought, as suggested by this replica painting of an ancient hunt from the Cave of Altamira in Spain.
Universal History Archive/Uig/ Bridgeman Images

According to a report published today in Nature Human Behaviour, running down big game such as antelope, moose, and even kangaroos was far more widespread than previously recognized. Researchers documented nearly 400 cases of endurance pursuits—a technique in which prey are chased to exhaustion—by Indigenous peoples around the globe between the 16th and 21st centuries. And in some cases, they suggest, it can be more efficient than stealthy stalking.

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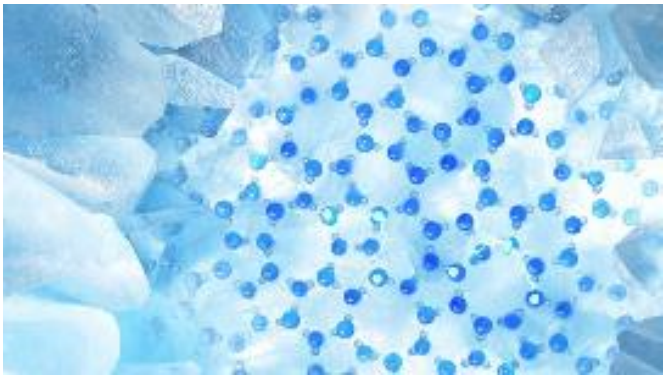
Here's How Ice May Get So Slippery

Images of atoms on the surface of frozen water hint at how a slick layer forms.



Frozen water's slipperiness comes from a liquidlike layer on its surface. Arrangements of water molecules on the surface of ice (illustrated in blue) are helping to explain how that layer forms.
Jiang Group/Peking University

For more than 160 years, scientists have been debating the quirks of ice's exterior. Frozen water is coated in a layer of molecules that behave like a liquid. A new experiment visualizes the surface of ice and hints at the origins of its quasi-liquid layer.

https://bit.ly/4auZUaY

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Is the 165-Year Reign of Oil Coming to an End?

realclearpolitics.com

Between the 17th and 20th centuries, humans killed millions of whales for oil. They stripped their blubber, spinning the iconic creatures in the water and pulling off the fat in a huge spiral like the peel of an apple. The blubber was boiled into oil, then strained into barrels to be used in everything from oil lamps to industrial lubricants.

For over 100 years, the voracious hunger for whale blubber drove blue, humpback and North Atlantic right whales to the brink of extinction. Now, commercial whaling is all but banned, whale blubber is used in just a handful of products, and whale populations have rebounded somewhat.

A similar sea change is coming for petroleum, though when and how it will play out is still incredibly hazy.

The best superforecasters, combined with machine learning, are only accurate at predicting geopolitical events up to a year in advance. But the general trends are clear. We've already transitioned much of our home energy use away from oil. And as climate change pushes us to accelerate that transition, we're developing new technologies that will help the world outgrow its oil dependence ever faster, experts say. In a few industries, like shipping and plastic, the decayed bones of long-dead animals will be the primary energy source for a long time to come. But a post-oil world is coming.

Do you plan to hold your breath while we wait and see?

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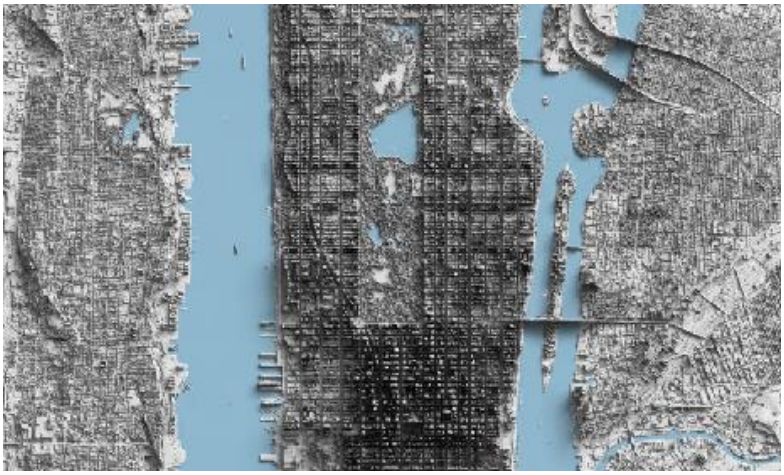
Highly Detailed Shaded Relief Map of Manhattan



ReliefViz makes shaded relief maps, which bring depth to natural and manmade features. The

result is a map that seems to jump off the page, or the screen.
ReliefViz

ReliefViz makes shaded relief maps, which bring depth to natural and manmade features. The result is a map that seems to jump off the page, or the screen.

This recent effort shows us the island of Manhattan, using LiDAR data from the US Geological Survey.

https://bit.ly/3VnzJNO

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BENEFITS OF A GOOD VOCABULARY!

I RECENTLY CALLED AN OLD ENGINEERING BUDDY OF MINE AND ASKED WHAT HE WAS WORKING ON THESE DAYS.

HE REPLIED THAT HE WAS WORKING ON "AQUA-THERMAL TREATMENT OF CERAMICS, ALUMINUM AND STEEL UNDER A CONSTRAINED ENVIRONMENT."

I WAS IMPRESSED UNTIL, UPON FURTHER INQUIRY, I LEARNED THAT HE WAS WASHING DISHES WITH HOT WATER UNDER HIS WIFE'S SUPERVISION.

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How Slow Do We Have to Go to Protect Right Whales from Harm?

Photograph by NOAA News 011811.

With less than 360 left, right whales are critically endangered, and predicted to die out completely in 16 years. "What I'm 100 percent confident about is that no mariner wants to hit a whale. No captain wants to come in with a whale wrapped around their bow," says Jessica Redfern, PHD and Associate Vice President at the Ocean Conservation Science, Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium in Boston. Yet all the good intentions of mariners aside doesn't change that an estimated one third of all right whales die because of vessel strikes, boats unknowingly hitting and killing them in the water.

In 2008, NOAA, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, set speed rules to protect right whales. They created the Right Whale Ship Speed Rule which set a speed limit of 10 knots for boats larger than 65 feet in whale habitat areas. These areas, called Seasonal Management Areas, are zones where we know whales migrate to and hunker down for a season. "NOAA did an assessment of the effectiveness of this rule and they could see that there's pretty good compliance," says Redfern.

https://bit.ly/3XJuiLS

But…

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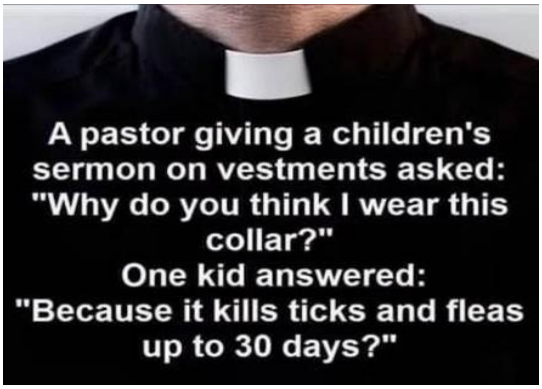

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Waffle-Shaped Solar Evaporator Delivers Durable Desalination

Solar desalination A waffle-shaped solar evaporator harnesses the energy of the sun to provide

spontaneous salt rejection and durable water purification.
(Courtesy: iStock/lena5)

There are various water treatment technologies available today, but one that has gathered a lot of attention lately is solar steam generation. Interfacial solar absorbers convert solar energy into heat to remove the salt from seawater and produce freshwater. By localizing the absorbed energy at the surface, interfacial solar absorbers reduce heat loss to bulk water.

Importantly, solar absorbers can be used off-grid and in remote regions, where potable water access is the most unreliable. However, many of these technologies cannot yet be made at scale because of salt crystallization on the solar absorber, which reduces both the light absorption and the surface area of the interface. Over time, the solar absorption capabilities become reduced and the supply of water becomes obstructed.

https://bit.ly/3xvPria

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Chords & Riffs

Kingston Trio (The Early Days 1957-1961)

Bob Shane, Dave Guard, and Nick Reynolds
ozsons

The Kingston Trio is an American folk and pop music group that helped launch the folk revival of the late 1950s to the late 1960s. The group started as a San Francisco Bay Area nightclub act with an original lineup of Dave Guard, Bob Shane, and Nick Reynolds. It rose to international popularity fueled by unprecedented sales of LP records and helped alter the direction of popular music in the U.S.

The Kingston Trio was one of the most prominent groups of the era's folk-pop boom, which they kick-started in 1958 with the release of the Trio's eponymous first album and its hit recording of "Tom Dooley", which became a number one hit and sold over three million copies as a single. The Trio released nineteen albums that made Billboard's Top 100, fourteen of which ranked in the top 10, and five of which hit the number 1 spot. Four of the group's LPs charted among the 10 top-selling albums for five weeks in November and December 1959, a record unmatched for more than 50 years, and the group still ranks in the all-time lists of many of Billboard's cumulative charts, including those for most weeks with a number 1 album, most total weeks charting an album, most number 1 albums, most consecutive number 1 albums, and most top ten albums.

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Tom Dooley https://youtu.be/S3zdE8bliGI
The MTA https://youtu.be/_oaVU0I_oCA
Where have all the flowers gone https://youtu.be/bI3QVsW30j0
Scotch & Soda https://youtu.be/TqGGAJ2D_bY
Viva El matador https://youtu.be/KPCJV-o5BWA

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I knew them when I was at Stanford in the late 1950s, seeing them (too often I have to admit) at Rosatti's, a local beer garden. I ran into them again in 1965 at Kadena Airbase where they were performing.

My F-4 squadron, VMFA-314 was stationed at Danang, RVN, but we were in Okinawa for a missile shoot. Separately that same night at Kadena, Johnny Mathis, and the Lionel Hampton Quartet with singer Joe Williams were performing at different ballrooms at the Kadena Officers' Club.

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Beautiful Long Exposure Drone Fireworks

Kadikan

Combining drones, flammable powder, and long exposure photography, French visual artist Jadikan creates stunning light paintings over natural landscapes.

The rings of fire that are created look like sparkly veils, or even magical portals to a different dimension.

https://mossandfog.com/beautiful-long-exposure-drone-fireworks/

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How Does CRISPR Work?

You've probably heard of CRISPR, a fairly new tool for gene editing. But how does the technology work?
(Image credit: Love Employee via Getty Images)

CRISPR is a versatile tool for editing genomes and has recently been approved as a gene therapy treatment for certain blood disorders.

"It's really the simplicity, the cost and the ease of use" that democratized this editing tool, Alison Van Eenennaam, a livestock geneticist at the University of California, Davis who uses CRISPR to alter the genetics of farm animals, told Live Science.

Recently, CRISPR has been approved to treat two blood disorders, and early-stage trials reveal its potential to treat inherited blindness. Here's everything you need to know about the groundbreaking technology.

https://bit.ly/3LaSAH7

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Bridge Editing Could Be More Powerful than CRISPR

The Arc Institute

You likely already know about CRISPR, the revolutionary gene-editing technology that's led to innovations in biology, medical treatments, and agriculture. What's less known is another powerful system called "bridge editing," which potentially goes a step further by allowing scientists to "recombine and rearrange DNA in a programmable way," according to the Arc Institute in California — or in other words, *bridge* different pieces of DNA.

"The bridge recombination mechanism solves some of the most fundamental challenges facing other methods of genome editing," Arc senior researcher Matthew Durrant, who led a recently published study on bridge recombination, said in a press release. "The ability to programmably rearrange any two DNA molecules opens the door to breakthroughs in genome design."

The release noted the editing could allow scientists to "mix and match any target and donor DNA sequences of interest," enabling them to remove faulty DNA and insert new, functional genetic material.

"We're excited about the potential to do much broader genomic changes beyond what we can currently do with CRISPR," study co-author Patrick Hsu told *New Scientist*. "We think this is an important step towards the broader vision of genome design."

Watch this short video to see how bridge editing works.

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Deaf Baby Can Hear After Gene Therapy Treatment

Seven months after her treatment, the baby girl can now respond to her parents' voices without the aid of a cochlear implant.

Opal Sandy from the U.K. was treated as part of an ongoing global trial investigating a new gene therapy for a rare type of congenital hearing loss. She's pictured in the image above with her parents.
(Image credit: Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Trust)

Opal Sandy, who is now an 18-month-old girl from the U.K., is the youngest child in the world to receive this type of gene therapy, which uses a harmless, modified virus to

correct genetic mutations in the body's cells. In this case, the therapy replaced a mutant gene associated with deafness with a working copy of that gene, according to a statement released May 9 by Cambridge University Hospitals.

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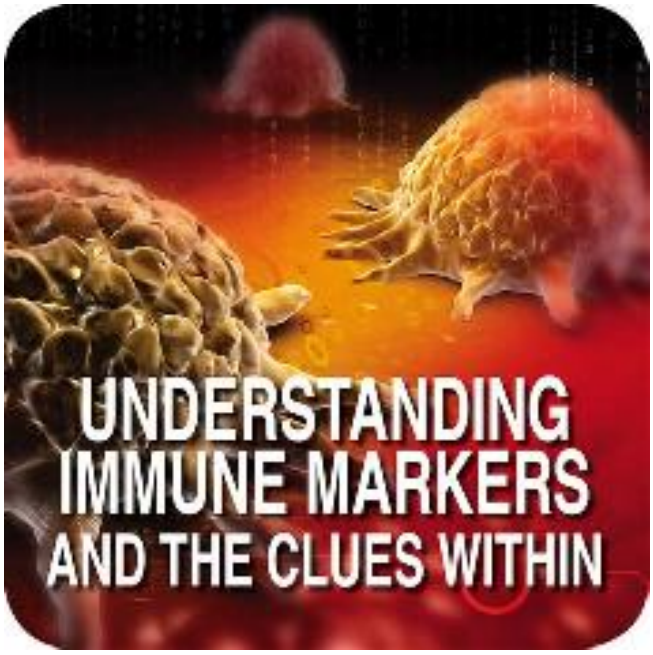
XX Marks the Spot for Autoimmune Disease?



rachelarthur.com

It's estimated that about 10% of people in the world are affected by at least one autoimmune disease—but about 65% of those people are women. Why women are so much more likely to have their immune systems mistakenly attack their own bodies is an enduring mystery in immunology. But the more researchers delve into it, the more one culprit seems to stand out: the X chromosome.

Although everyone has an X chromosome, for most men the X pairs with a much shorter Y, which lacks many of the genes found on X. The vast majority of women, however, have an XX pair. There are lots of proteins that people with two X chromosomes would overproduce if it weren't for a phenomenon called X-chromosome inactivation, which involves 'turning off' one of the two Xs by blanketing it with a long stretch of RNA called Xist. It is this process—and alterations to it—that may underlie many autoimmune diseases.

In a new study with mice, researchers discovered that if they messed with the expression of Xist, they could reactivate genes that had been silenced and spontaneously give female mice symptoms typical of lupus, a common autoimmune

disease. The findings echo work from earlier this year which found that expressing Xist in male mice, which normally don't produce the RNA, made them as likely to develop lupus as females. Both studies suggest that Xist plays a pivotal role—and could help point researchers towards new ways to treat these often devastating conditions.

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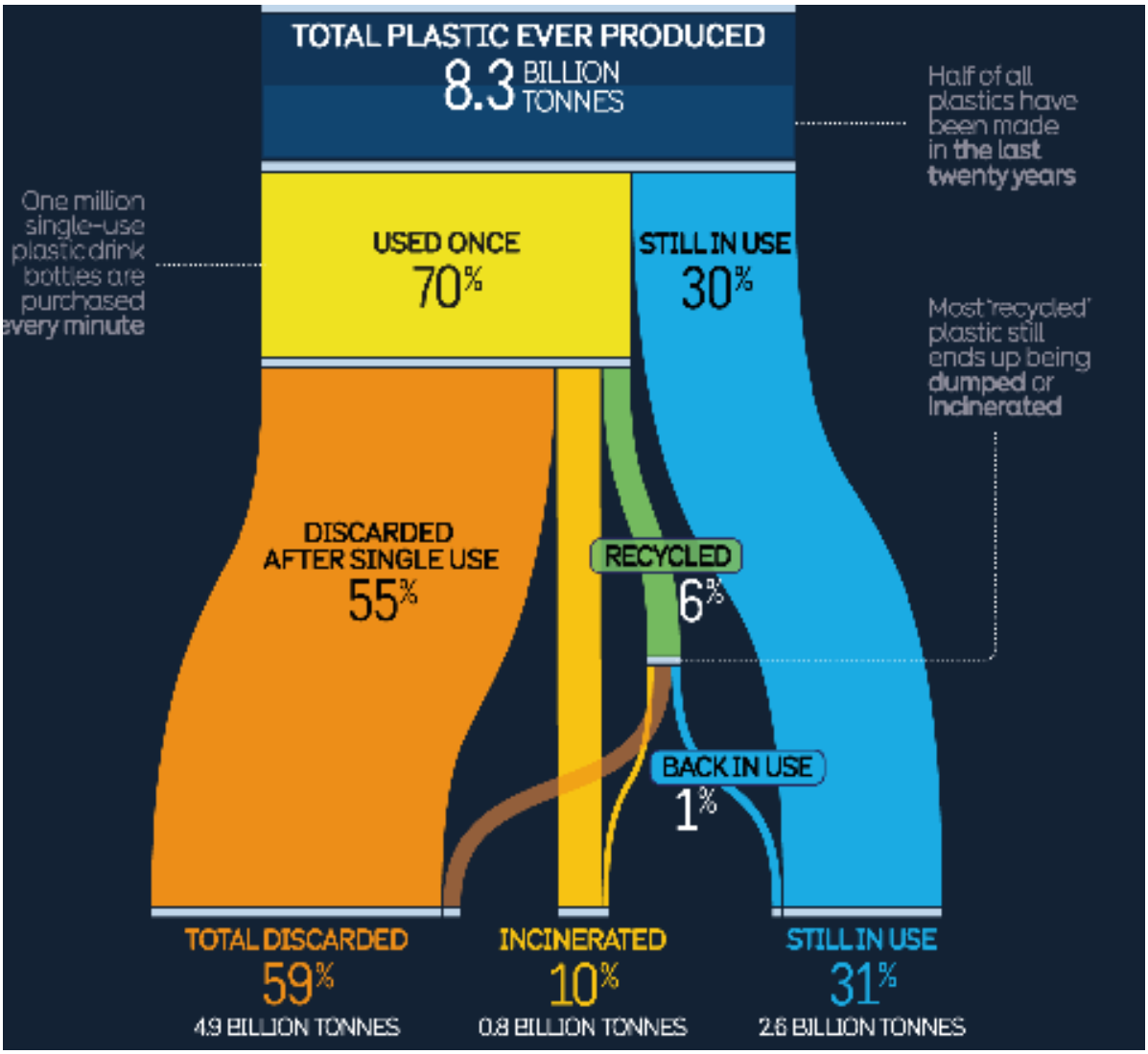
Plastics: The Problems and What You Can Do



David McCanless

The properties that make plastic so versatile and useful make them difficult for nature to fully re-assimilate.

https://bit.ly/4cM9rMl

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Turning 1.5 Million Plastic Bottles into Clothing Every Day

recyclingbins.co

Polyester is one of the most popular fabrics in the world. Made from PET plastic, it is prized for its durability, lightness, and low cost of production. While these characteristics make it ideal for various uses across the textile industry, the oversupply of polyester has also fueled an environmental disaster.
Now, brands like Adidas, Nike, and Shein are trying to increase the amount of polyester made from recycled plastics -- but is this the best use of old plastic? We visited Tamil Nadu, India, to see how one company makes clothing from used plastic bottles and whether this is the best solution for this waste stream.

https://youtu.be/FChEek0NSOI

And remember to separate caps from bottles since their plastics are irreconcilable.

Poetry Corner

Omar Khayyam (1048-1131)

Omar Khayyam was a Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet, renowned in his own country and time for his scientific achievements but chiefly known to English-

speaking readers through the translation of a collection of his robāʿīyāt ("quatrains") in The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám (1859), by the English writer Edward FitzGerald.

Omar's poems had attracted comparatively little attention until they inspired FitzGerald to write his celebrated The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám, containing such now-famous phrases as "A Jug of Wine, a Loaf of Bread—and Thou," "Take the Cash, and let the Credit go," and "The Flower that once has blown forever dies." These quatrains have been translated into almost every major language and are largely responsible for colouring European ideas about Persian poetry

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam

251.
Are you depressed? Then take of bhang one grain,
Of rosy grape-juice take one pint or twain;
Sufis, you say, must not take this or that,
Then go and eat the pebbles off the plain!

253.
Oh! wine is richer that the realm of Jam,
More fragrant than the food of Miriam;
Sweeter are sighs that drunkards heave at morn
Than strains of Bu Sa'id and Bin Adham.

254.
Deep in the rondure of the heavenly blue,
There is a cup, concealed from mortals' view,
Which all must drink in turn; Oh, sigh not then,
But drink it boldly, when it comes to you!

257.
O heart! this world is but a fleeting show,
Why should its empty griefs distress thee so?
Bow down, and bear thy fate, the eternal pen
Will not unwrite its roll for thee, I trow!

259.
Dark wheel! how many lovers thou hast slain,
Like Mahmud and Ayaz, O inhumane!
Come, let us drink, thou grantest not two lives;
When one is spent, we find it not again.
262.
In taverns better far commune with Thee,
Than pray in mosques, and fail Thy face to see!
O first and last of all Thy creatures Thou,
'Tis Thine to burn, and Thine to cherish me!

264.
I flew here, as a bird from the wild, in aim
Up to a higher nest my course to frame;
But, finding here no guide who knows the way,
Fly out by the same door where through I came.

267.
Go to! Cast dust on those deaf skies, who spurn
Thy orisons and bootless prayers, and learn
To quaff the cup, and hover round the fair;
Of all who go, did ever one return?

269.
Again to tavern-haunts do we repair,
And say "Adieu " to the five hours of prayer;
Where'er we see a long-necked flask of wine,
We elongate our necks that wine to share.

271.
You ask what is this life so frail, so vain,
'Tis long to tell, yet will I make it plain;
'Tis but a breath blown from the vasty deeps,
And then blown back to those same deeps again!

272.
To-day to heights of rapture have I soared,
Yea, and with drunken Maghs pure wine adored;
I am become beside myself, and rest
In that pure temple, "Am not I your Lord?"

274.
I put my lips to the cup, for I did yearn
The hidden cause of length of days to learn;

He leaned his lip to mine, and whispered low,
"Drink! for, once gone, you never will return. "

278.
Ask not the chances of the time to be,
And for the past, 'tis vanished, as you see;
This ready-money breath set down as gain,
Future and past concern not you or me.

279.
What launched that golden orb his course to run,
What wrecks his firm foundations, when 'tis done,
No man of science ever weighed with scales,
Nor made assay with touchstone, no, not one!

280.
I pray thee to my counsel lend thine ear,
Cast off this false hypocrisy's veneer;
This life a moment is, the next all time;
Sell not eternity for earthly gear!

284.
Last night, as I reeled from the tavern door,
I saw a sage, who a great wine-jug bore;
I said, "O Shaikh, have you no shame?" Said he,
"Allah hath boundless mercy in his store. "

285.
Life's fount is wine, Khizir its guardian,
I, like Elias, find it where I can;
'Tis sustenance for heart and spirit too,
Allah himself calls wine "a boon to man."

289.
Grieve not at coming ill, you can't defeat it,
And what far-sighted person goes to meet it?
Cheer up! bear not about a world of grief,
Your fate is fixed, and grieving will not cheat it.

293.
Did no fair rose my paradise adorn,
I would make shift to deck it with a thorn;
And if I lacked my prayer-mats, beads, and Shaikh,
Those Christian bells and stoles I would not scorn.

295.
See! the dawn breaks, and rends night's canopy:
Arise! and drain a morning draught with me!
Away with gloom! full many a dawn will break
Looking for us, and we not here to see!

296.
O you who tremble not at fires of hell,
Nor wash in water of remorse's well,
When winds of death shall quench your vital torch,
Beware lest earth your guilty dust expel.

298.
With maids stately as cypresses, and fair
As roses newly plucked, your wine-cups share,
Or e'er Death's blasts shall rend your robe of fiesh
Like yonder rose-leaves, lying scattered there!

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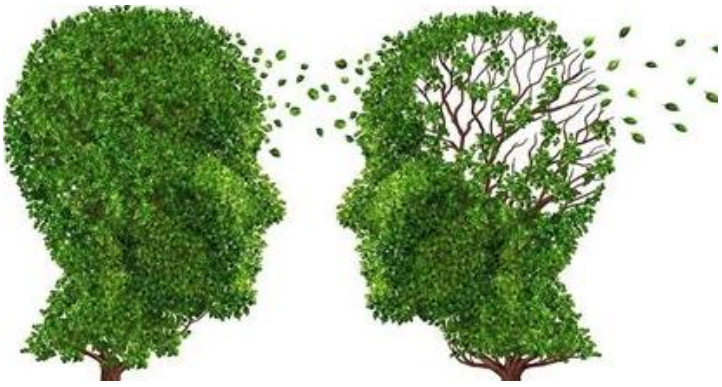
Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures



health-panel.co.uk

Alzheimer's Disease Facts and Figures (PDF), an annual report released by the Alzheimer's Association, reveals the burden of Alzheimer's and dementia on individuals, caregivers, government and the nation's health care system.

The accompanying special report, *Mapping a Better Future for Dementia Care Navigation* (PDF), provides a comprehensive look into dementia care navigation, revealing significant insights into the experiences and challenges faced by caregivers and health care workers in helping people living with Alzheimer's or other dementia navigate the health care system.

https://www.alz.org/alzheimers-dementia/facts-figures

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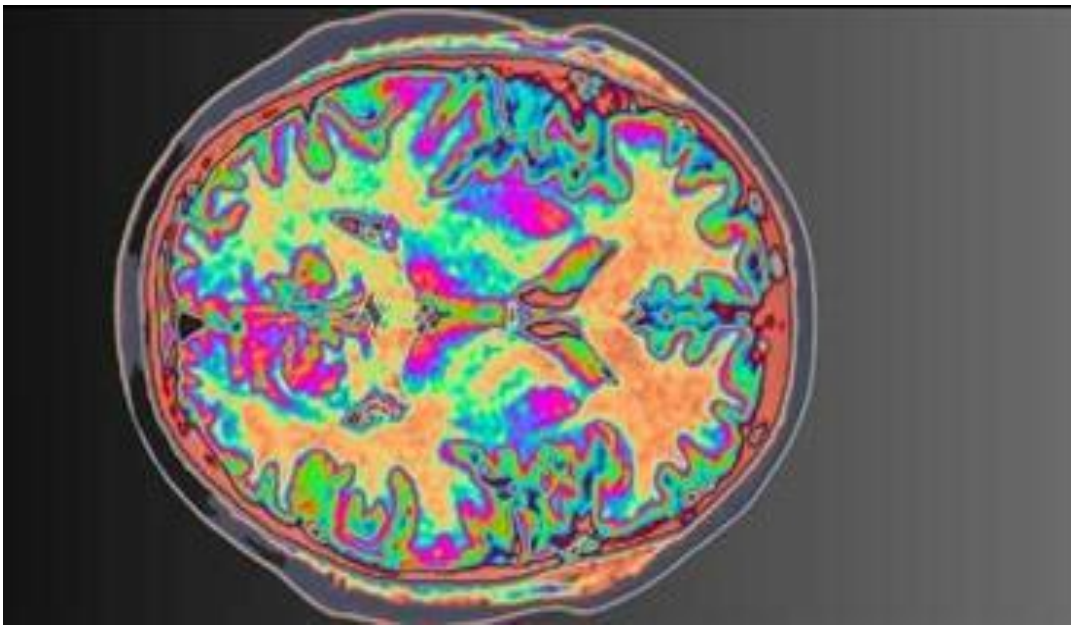
FDA Approves New Alzheimer's Treatment, Donanemab



xpresschronicle.com

The Food and Drug Administration approved a new Alzheimer's treatment called donanemab on Tuesday, clearing the way for the third addition to a new class of drugs aimed at slowing the brain's decline in patients facing the early stages of the disease.

Branded as Kisunla by drugmaker Eli Lilly, donanemab's approval follows years of setbacks and delays in getting the experimental Alzheimer's treatment to market, despite promising clinical trial results.

https://bit.ly/3RSOtDs

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Your Brain Just Got a 10X Bump in Data Storage. Did You Feel It?

The amount of information the brain can store is greater than once thought, new research suggests.
(Image credit: koto_feja/Getty Images)

Scientists harnessed a new method to precisely measure the amount of information the brain can store, and it could help advance our understanding of learning.

The brain may be able to hold nearly 10 times more information than previously thought, a new study confirms.

Similar to computers, the brain's memory storage is measured in "bits," and the number of bits it can hold rests on the connections between its neurons, known as synapses. Historically, scientists thought synapses came in a fairly limited number of sizes and strengths, and this in turn limited the brain's storage capacity. However, this theory has been challenged in recent years — and the new study further backs the idea that the brain can hold about 10-fold more than once thought.

https://bit.ly/4eeu0lX

Yeah? How come I could never remember my general orders or rifle number?

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Blood Test Could Flag Parkinson's Disease Years Before Symptoms

(Patricio Nahuelhual/Getty Images)

By analyzing the proteins in the blood, a new blood test and AI tool can identify which at-risk patients are most likely to develop Parkinson's disease, and may be able to predict whether a person will go on to develop Parkinson's disease up to seven years before any symptoms arise.

The test looks at proteins in the blood whose concentrations differ in people with Parkinson's and those without. Using the test and an artificial intelligence (AI) tool, scientists could identify people with a confirmed Parkinson's diagnosis, as well as those within an at-risk group who would go on to develop the condition.

https://bit.ly/4exeLVv

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Exploring the Ancient History of the Olympics

With the 2024 Summer Olympics in Paris opening soon, it's fun to look back at early games. Way back.
MossandFog

The origins of the Olympic Games are steeped in Greek mythology and legend. According to tradition, the Games were founded by Heracles (Hercules), the son of Zeus, who commemorated his completion of the Twelve Labors by establishing a sporting festival. Another legend credits the hero Pelops with initiating the Games after winning a chariot race against King Oenomaus of Pisa.

The earliest recorded Olympics took place in 776 BCE in Olympia, a sanctuary site in the Peloponnese region of Greece. This event marked the beginning of the ancient Olympic Games, held every four years in honor of Zeus, the king of the Greek gods.

https://bit.ly/4eIGgM1

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Inside Paris' Landmark Olympic Village

Air filters line a street in the Olympic Village in Saint-Denis.
Nathan Laine/Bloomberg/Getty Images

Once the Paralympics have finished on September 8, the village — which contains 82 buildings — will be converted into office space for 6,000 workers and apartments to house another 6,000 people.

The hope is that the project will provide a model to alleviate a housing crisis in the French capital, where rising interest rates, surging prices and a supply crunch have made it harder than ever to buy or rent a home. Demand for affordable housing is so intense that when a small 10 square meter (108 square feet) apartment in Paris' up-and-coming 10th arrondissement hit the rental market last year at a price of 610 euros ($614) per month, it attracted a staggering 765 applicants in less than a week.

https://bit.ly/3XKgOzq

With digs this chic, who needs airconditioning, huh?

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Why Are Some People Faster Than Others?

trustyspotter

There are several reasons why some people can run very fast while others tend to run more slowly. Genetics – the traits you inherit from your parents – play a role, but so do your choices and experiences.

As pediatric exercise scientists, we create and evaluate programs that help children be healthy. The exciting news is that while you have no control over your genetics, you can train to improve your speed.

https://bit.ly/4biWwAC

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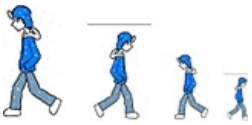
My Walking Thoughts



For Sunday July 7 2024

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Back to the Barn on Two Wings and Endless Prayers

The Engine Out emergency behind me, I began a left climbing turn to the north, on the assumption that Lieutenant Winan's prior instruction—i.e. return to base--was once again in effect. Sounds like I've got the situation well in hand, right? Ummm…maybe not completely.

One fly in the ointment was that my mind was still on the excitement of the past few minutes, another--the real culprit--lay in my unresolved concern for the size of the Trojan and my ability to get it back to earth without damaging it. Thus, when I rolled out of the turn on a heading of north, my preoccupation with these idle thoughts rendered me at a loss (*momentarily* I told myself in retrospect, but at a loss nonetheless) of what I was going to do next. Luckily my subconscious self was not so confused since without conscious effort I completed the climb at 6500 feet, reset the power to maintain 170 knots, decreased the cowl flaps, trimmed for steady flight, and switched the radio to ATIS to receive the latest North Whiting landing information.

So when Lieutenant Winans' voice on the intercom interrupted my reveries asking, "What's you plan for getting into the landing pattern," I responded to the challenge by winging it.

"My plan…uhh," I stammered, "is to overfly Milton then descend to cross Point Baker at 2500 feet. From there I will continue the descent to a right downwind entry for Runway 23 at 1000 feet."

Then remembering that the tower might be interested in my intentions, I added, "I'll switch to Tower frequency at Point Baker and call my entry." I ended my somewhat staggered explanation hoping I hadn't left something important out, but the intercom remained silent.

Crossing Milton I turned northwest, set up a 500 ft/minute rate of descent and began to address the Landing Checklist, saying aloud each of item as I confirmed its completion…a habit that's stayed with me to this day.

- "Harness Locked…
- "Blower Low…
- "Mixture Rich…
- "Canopy Closed…
- "…Wheels, Propeller, and Flaps to go"

At Point Baker I spotted two aircraft ahead, one established on the downwind, the other on a 45 degree heading to intersect take his place behind the first. With a sense of foreboding I realized there was no backing away now.

"North Tower, 2 Whiskey 248 entering the right downwind for landing." Did my voice squeak? I think so.

Now descending through 1000 feet at 120 knots, I completed the Checklist:

- "Gear Down…Three in the Green…
- "Prop Full Forward…
- "Flaps Down…
- "Landing Checklist Complete."

Slowing to 100 knots and manifold pressure at 20 inches, I rounded the point 90 degrees to the runway heading and intercepted the landing line at 90 knots with ~1000 feet to go to touchdown.

"You're a tad low," caused me to add a little throttle (did I do it or did he?) ditto the nose position that flattened just a smidgen, and several seconds later the comforting '*thump/thump…thump'* as the landing gear made contact with terra firma.

"Any time you're ready, hotshot, how about going to idle and getting on the binders," followed shortly by, "Let's clear the runway at midfield."

"North Whiting Ground, 2 Whisky 248's clear of the runway, request taxi to the flightline," which was granted.

That was it except for following the ground crewman's guidance into the parking spot, and the Engine Shutdown Procedure:

- "Cowl Flaps Open…

- "Magnetos Checked…
- "Idle Mixture…
- "Scavenge engine at 1200 rpm for 60 seconds…
- "Mixture Idle Cutoff."

As Lieutenant Winans and I walked to the line shack following the post flight inspection, I thanked him for his light touch in 'following me through' on the controls.

"Huh?" he grunted. "What are you talking about. The only times I touched anything was to start and end the Engine Out emergency."

It was one of those wholly epiphanic moments I've had in flying. The aircraft is better at its tasks than I will ever be.

Next Episode, Junior Birdman Spreads His Wings

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