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CRAFTING CULINARY ART! MEET THE WOMAN BEHIND THE WORLD'S LARGEST **CHEESE SCULPTURES**

By Contributing Writer

n the realm of culinary artistry, creativity knows no bounds, and one woman is pushing the boundaries in a truly cheesy way. Sarah Kaufmann, a talented cheese sculptor, has gained international acclaim for her remarkable ability to transform ordinary blocks of cheese into extraordinary works of art. With a passion for both cheese and sculpting, Kaufmann has carved her way into the record books, earning recognition for creating some of the largest cheese sculptures the world has ever seen.

Hailing from a small town in Wisconsin, often dubbed the "Dairy State" of the USA, Kaufmann developed an early appreciation for cheese. Surrounded by lush farmland and dairy cows, she grew up immersed in the rich traditions of cheese



making and dairy farming. Inspired by the local craftsmanship and culinary heritage, Jenkins found her calling in the unlikely fusion of cheese and art.



Kaufmann's journey into cheese sculpting began as a hobby, a creative outlet that allowed her to combine her love for sculpting with her passion for cheese. Starting with simple shapes and designs, she gradually honed her skills, experimenting with different types of cheese and sculpting techniques. As her confidence grew, so did her ambitions, and Kaufmann soon set her sights on creating larger and more ambitious cheese sculptures.

What sets Kaufmann apart is her ability to work with massive quantities of cheese, tackling challenges that would daunt even the most experienced sculptors. Armed with specialized tools and an unwavering determination, she has carved her way through hundreds of pounds of cheese, turning them into intricate masterpieces that defy imagination.

From towering cheese castles to lifelike animal sculptures, Kaufmann's portfolio is as diverse as it is impressive. Each sculpture is meticulously crafted, with attention to detail and a keen eye for aesthetics. Whether she's replicating famous landmarks or capturing the essence of beloved characters, Kaufmann infuses her creations with personality and charm, elevating cheese sculpting to a true art form.

One of Kaufmann's most notable achievements came in 2019 when she broke the Guinness World Record for the largest cheese sculpture. Working tirelessly for weeks, she transformed a staggering 6,000-pound block of cheddar into a breathtaking replica of the Eiffel Tower. Standing over six feet tall and intricately detailed, the sculpture captivated audiences and cemented Kaufmann's status as a pioneer in the world of cheese sculpting.

Beyond the accolades and records. Kaufmann's work serves as a celebration of craftsmanship, creativity, and the joy of cheese. Her sculptures have become beloved attractions at food festivals, art exhibitions, and cheese-themed events around the world, delighting audiences of all ages. More than just edible art, Kaufmann's creations spark conversations, inspire curiosity, and bring people together in appreciation of the simple pleasures of life.

Looking ahead, Kaufmann shows no signs of slowing down, continuing to push the boundaries of cheese sculpting and exploring new possibilities in culinary art. With each sculpture she creates, she invites us to see cheese in a new light, transforming it from a humble dairy product into a medium for creativity and expression. In the world of cheese sculpting, Sarah

Kaufmann stands as a true visionary, carving her way into history one block of cheese at a time.





Refreshments Available for Purchase. Admission Prices Vary For More Info. www.MyTarzana.Org







12 GAUGE WIRE CONCERT: From the New Orleans classics of Louis Armstrong, to the joyful melodies of Duke Ellington, to the cool sounds of Miles Davis.

March 29

TARZANA MUSIC NIGHT: LIVE!: Another spectacular Tarzana Music Night: Live! show takes place on Friday, March 29. This is an acoustic-based singer-songwriter showcase featuring some of L.A.'s top musicians and songwriters.

April 7

RICTAYLOR MEMORIAL TRIBUTE CONCERT:

Honoring the life and music of Ric Taylor, an extremely talented and beloved singer-songwriter who was a pillar of the local music community. Many of the performers will be playing covers of Ric's beautiful songs.

April 12 THE BEATUNES CONCERT: Hear all your favorite Beatles songs and sing along with The Beatunes, a fabulous Beatles tribute band that will present a concert in the garden on Friday, April 12. The Beatunes will amaze you with their faithful renderings of the beautiful, timeless songs of The Beatles.

Tarzana Community & Cultural Center 19130 Ventura Blvd Tarzana



COVER STORY



By Barbara Beckley

GOOD FOOD AND GOOD COMPANY. THIS IS WHAT California life is all about! Check out some the Best destinations the are waiting for you, With your one-and-only, your family, And your Friends. Bon Appetite!

VIEWS TO LOVE

For date night, or friends' night, The Penthouse Restaurant (www.penthouserestaurant.com) in Santa Monica is spectacular. Sit at the bar or a window table, pairing craft cocktails and fine coastal cuisine with amazing 280-degree ocean and coast views atop the 18th floor of The Huntley Hotel. For romance, the "Malibu Cabana Experience" at a lux window table is Cupid's dream with a four-course, Chef-Crafted Tasting Menu, and comp welcome beverage. Foodie finds range from the Signature Seafood Tower to large format Chef's Prime Cut, and Lobster Truffle Macaroni & Cheese. Oh my! Open daily, 7 a.m. – 10 p.m.

"Nobu Malibu is one of those places so stunning, you may hear yourself saying, 'Is this real life?'," writes Timeout.com. And we agree. With a menu designed by celebrity chef Nobu Matsuhisa, and luxe furnishings overlooking Surfrider Beach and Malibu Pier—it's the epitome of romance. The sushi and modern Japanese cuisine are as beautiful as the setting. Mini tacos filled with creamy uni. The signature Tiradito -- thin slices of whitefish dotted with chili – all tasty works of art. And dreamy drinks. Perhaps Nobu's own Reserve Tequila or the Matsuhisa Martini, with Suntory Haku Vodka, Hokusetsu Junmai Sake, ginger, and Kyuri Japanese cucumber. Open daily, noon – 10 p.m.

There's always a party – and great views – at Fuego Restaurant & Bar's (www.hotelmayalongbeach.com) "Maya Mania 2024" weekend brunches in Long Beach. Treat family and friends to indoor or outdoor views of the harbor, Queen Mary, and Pacific Ocean; delicious Latin-infused cuisine, plus learn about ancient Maya culture! April 7 features Mayan Music with the "Maya-Achis" band; May 5 is "Cinco de Maya celebration;" May 19 is Long Beach Pride Weekend with the world's first LGBTQ+ mariachi band; and June 23 is Mayan Story Telling with the "Copali-Copili" Mayan Dancers. On the menu choose tasty cuisine from Cilantro Lime Skirt Steak to Eggs Benedict, and "farm-to-glass"



cocktails. Perhaps the Chilcano De Pisco, with Barsol Pisco and blood orange. Brunch Saturday and Sunday, 11 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Colorful murals, colorful cuisine and colorful waterfront views make for fun times at second-story indoor-outdoor Margarita Villa (www.margaritvillaventura.com) in Ventura Harbor Village. Choose ocean, harbor and hillside views on two rooftop patios and sizzling Southwest flavors combining Mexican grill with Tex-Mex. Think salty margaritas, award-winning red salsa, fresh chips, and other colorful delights from guac, ceviche, and shrimp chile rellenos to clam chowder – with a twist – and Ahi tuna salad with chipotle dressing. Bring the kids. It's got a great children's menu. Or your date for happy hour, Monday through Friday, 3 - 7 p.m. and toast to the sunset. Open daily, 11 a.m. – 9/10 p.m.

Don't let the super casual look of Andria's Seafood Restaurant and Market (www.andriasseafood.com), also in Venture Harbor, fool you. Voted the #1 Seafood Market in Ventura, this family-owned legend since 1982 is famous for choice, fresh locally caught fish and beautiful waterside and mountain views from its harbor patios. It's known for hand-battered Fish & Chips, homemade clam chowder, and fresh local fish – grilled, steamed, charbroiled, deep fried, stir fried, sautéed. Think Halibut, Alaskan Cod, white, and black seabass, shrimp, oysters and so much more, with slaw and fries. Also "Andria's Original Fish by the Piece." And dessert! The White Chocolate Raspberry Cheesecake speaks for itself. Open daily, 11 a.m. – 9/10 p.m.

recreating the nostalgic family moments you remember so fondly ... Our homestyle cooking in a rustic, cozy setting will bring you back in time." Whatever you order perhaps the Melanzane alla Parmigiana, with eggplant, tomato sauce, provolone, pecorino, and fresh mozzarella; or Brasato di Manzo, with bone-in slow-braised beef short ribs, mashed potatoes and sauteed mushrooms - "All our recipes come from a lifetime spent in the cucina. Each has a history - a story," he enthuses. No surprise Nonna's is an Open Table Diners' Choice 2023 winner. Open daily, 5 p.m. to closing. Not just any Brazilian. Head to Thousand Oaks and Moqueca (www.moquecarestaurant.com) for unique Moqueca cuisine from the southeastern Brazilian state of Espírito Santo. Partake of traditional clay pot fare, with the seafood of your choice cooked in fresh rich tomato sauce; juicy shrimp, mouthwatering Brazilian steaks like "Picanha-Grelhada," 12 oz. top sirloin seasoned in rock salt, grilled with chimichurri, and served with farofa rice, black beans, and fried yucca. The laidback ambiance and kids' menu is perfect for families. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 4 -9 p.m.

Continued next page ...

COVER STORY

GO FOR GOLD

In 2023, 10 SoCal restaurants were added to the California Michelin Guide. Here's the hautest new Michelin "Discoveries," and new Michelin One Star find.

Easy to fall in love at – and with --Amour (www.amourweho.com), serving French Contemporary in West Hollywood. Settle into the library-like ambiance of the dining room, or cozy banquettes and booths on the patio. Choose from multicourse tasting menus or à la carte menu that blends French and Asian influences, such as



Chawanmushi, with Perigord truffles and trout roe; New Caledonia blue prawn carpaccio and a French-style omelet with a quenelle of caviar and Comté foam. Just two of the well-executed dishes Michelin Discovered. "Wagyu sided by crispy matchstick potatoes has a hint of sweetness courtesy of a swirl of beet puree. For dessert – the Millefeuille with dulce de leche brings it all home," raves Michelin. Open Tuesday to Saturday, 5:30 – 9:30/10:30 p.m.

Indulge in Michelin Discovery Chinese at Liu's Cafe (www.liuscafe.com) in Koreatown, and what Michelin says are "the perfect house-made pork wontons." Take a seat – then order at the counter. The house-made Pork Wontons, of course, for "a tender, tasty treat, and be sure to get the extra egg noodles to soak up that wonderfully kicky chili oil," writes Michelin. Also, the Braised Pork Belly Rice – it's "pure comfort." Washed down with a pot of tea, preferably Milk Oolong. Close out with the Michelin recommended Citrus Curd Tart, with shaved fennel salad. Open Wednesday to Sunday, 10:30 a.m. – 3/3:30 p.m.

Head to Beverly Hills and Michelin Discovery Italian at Funke (www.funke-

la.com) helmed by Owner-Chef Evan Funke. Michelin says it's a stunning tribute to Italian cooking, with handmade pasta taking center stage and even a glassed-in room to watch the pasta-makers at work. Tall ceilings, red leather booths, and stone tables with brown leather/suede chairs set a stunning tone for a menu that pulls from their sister restaurants (Felix and Mother Wolf) while remaining true to itself. Michelin suggests starting with "their pillowy focaccia, then savor a plate of tender South Pacific blue prawns in a garlicky salsa verde. The handmade agnolotti is perfectly al dente with a rich and creamy filling of sugo di arrosto, erbette chard, and parmigiano reggiano. Torta di cioccolato is a wonderful finish." Open Monday to Saturday, 5 - 10/10:30 p.m.

And Gardena to Sushi Sonagi (www.sushisonagi.com) for "delicately prepared omakase," as Michelin describes the Japanese cuisine of this 2023 Discovery. Directed by second-generation sushi Chef Daniel Son, this eight-seat sushi counter rewards with an enticing multicourse omakase. Chawanmushi, an ankimo tart, and minimally dressed nigiri. "Though it's the dolsot sekogani, or female snow crab stone pot rice, that makes a big impression," raves Michelin. "Presented in the pot, then heated to produce a crispy crust, it's then portioned to eager diners who delight in the richly seasoned meat." End with a charcoal-roasted sweet potato topped with house-made white sesame ice cream. Open Friday to Sunday, 5:30 - 10:30 p.m.

Also, Sawa (www.barsawa.us) for perfectly prepared Michelin Discovery Japanese in a sleek, edomae-style omakase in the basement of a DTLA office building. Insider tip: it isn't easy to find, but they'll send a video with directions. And so worth it. Their fish is sourced from Japan, with bluefin tuna hailing from Mexico and Spain. Michelin was also impressed by the cocktail pairing. For food, "Nigiri is left to shine with a stroke of nikiri and simple toppings of yuzu kosho or ginger, but items like the shredded sous vide scallop roll prove that they're willing to be playful, too. Shrimp cake with panko-battered, deep-fried lotus root is spot on, while minced spearhead squid topped with Hokkaido bafun uni tucked in nori hits all the right notes. Soy sauce cheesecake makes a smooth, rich ending," enthuses Michelin. Open Tuesday to Sunday, 6 - 9:30 p.m.



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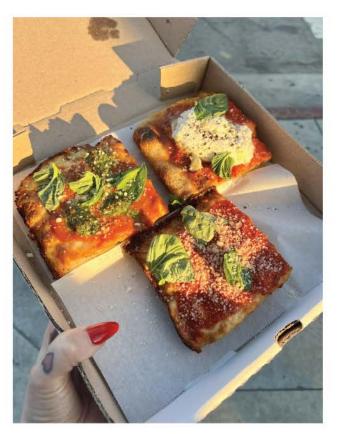
Love to the rescue*

COVER STORY

And UKA (www.ukarestaurant.com) at Ovation Hollywood in LA, for a Michelin Discovery Contemporary Japanese Kaiseki experience. Created by two chefs formerly with the Permanent Mission of Japan to the United Nations, their fish is flown in twice weekly from Japan. The Bonito is house-made and other products are sourced locally for the best quality, writes Michelin. Guests are invited to savor six or nine courses. Most of the menu leans traditional, like the kabutamushi, a dumpling made with shredded turnip and filled with Japanese sea bream; while French influences are seen in dishes like grilled abalone with a butter ponzu sauce, and wagyu with a red wine jus and miso butter sauce, says Michelin. Open Wednesday to Sunday, 5/6 - 10:30 p.m.

Yes, there's also Michelin Discovery American cuisine! Little Fish (www.littlefishechopark.com) in Echo Park serves outstanding American with a seafood focus by chefs Anna Sonenshein and Niki Vahle, lauds Michelin. Open for breakfast and lunch, mornings include Fish Tartines, and Fish and Mushroom Congee, while midday features the Signature Fried Fish and other sandwiches. Also, a "tender and sweet Beer-battered Pacific Striped Bass," continues Michelin, topped with American cheese, kewpie mayo, and dill pickles on a potato bun. Meat-eaters and vegetarians are welcome with items including steak; and "a standout" Broccoli Rabe Melt, with kabocha squash spread, provolone piuccante cheese and chili garlic. Open Wednesday to Sunday, 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

And Peruvian. Family-owned Pollos A La Brasa (https://www.facebook.com/p/Pollos-A-La-Brasa-Eagle-Rock-) has been in Eagle Rock for some 30 years. "It's a touch warm inside," writes Michelin, "from the heat of all



the live-fire cooking – that you can smell a block away. The live-wood fire delivers smoky chicken meat with a crispy skin that's marinated with their family secret." There are several chicken options, but Michelin recommends the chicken by itself. "And don't skip their twice-fried French fries and consider a second container of their spicy green aji sauce." Open daily, 11 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Even Michelin Discovery pizza! At Quarter Sheets Pizza Club (www.quartersheetspizza.com) in Echo Park. Owner-Chefs Aaron Lindell and Hannah Ziskin's have nailed that "haute hipster vibe with its casual styling and vinyl and cassette collection," writes Michelin. "One bite of their inch-thick, pan-style pizzas and you're hooked. Baked to order, each with flavorful sauce and quality ingredients." Pepperoni is a classic choice, or better yet the Pimento Grove, a vodka sauced pizza topped with olives, 'nduja and cheese. And Ziskin's signature Princess cake. "Worth every bite," says Michelin. Open Wednesday to Saturday, 5 -9 p.m.; Sunday, noon – 2:30 p.m., and 3:30 – 6 p.m.

One Star Hooray!

Heritage (www.heritaagerestaurant.fullbellyfoodgroup.com) in a converted Craftsman house in Long Beach, scored a double Michelin whammy! Winning a Michelin Star, and the new Michelin Green Star – for sustainable gastronomy. Brother-and-sister duo Philip and Lauren Pretty run the kitchen and front of house, respectively, getting the details just right, says Michelin. A single multicourse tasting highlights top-notch ingredients including produce sourced from their nearby farm. "Seasonal fruit forms a common thread, as in preserved kumquats paired with roasted beet and impeccably cooked dry-aged duck breast. And in the guise of a frozen yogurt, in a dessert of charred strawberries and herbaceous yuzu granita." Open Tuesday to Saturday, 5 - 9 p.m.

Dig in!!



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MINUTIA MEAL KITS CAN MAKE YOUR LIFE EASIER

By Contributing Writer

eal kits have surged in popularity in recent years, revolutionizing the way we approach cooking and meal planning. These pre-portioned and sometimes partially-prepared food packages delivered right to your doorstep are not just a trend; they offer tangible benefits that can simplify your life in various ways. Here are five ways meal kits can make your life easier, catering to different lifestyles, dietary needs, and culinary skills. Time-Saving Convenience One of the most significant advantages of meal kits is the considerable amount of time they save. In today's fast-paced world, finding the time to plan meals, grocery shop, and cook can be challenging. Meal kits eliminate the need for meal planning and grocery shopping, as everything you need comes right to your door, perfectly portioned and ready to cook. This

convenience can free up several hours a week, allowing you to spend more time on activities you enjoy or with loved ones.

Reducing Food Waste

Meal kits are designed to provide exactly what you need for each recipe, meaning you're less likely to end up with unused ingredients that eventually go to waste. In a traditional cooking setup, buying specific ingredients in larger quantities than needed is common, leading to excess food



that may not be used before it spoils. Meal kits help in reducing food waste by ensuring that the portions are just right for the meals you're preparing, which is not only good for your wallet but also for the environment.

Encouraging Healthy Eating

Maintaining a balanced diet can be easier with meal kits, as they often come with nutritionally balanced recipes. Many meal kit companies offer a variety of dietary options catering to different needs, including vegetarian, vegan, low-carb, and gluten-free diets. Having access to these options can encourage healthier eating habits by making nutritious meals more accessible and easier to prepare. Moreover, since the meals are pre-portioned, it helps in managing portion sizes, which is a crucial aspect of keeping a healthy diet.



Expanding Your Culinary Horizons

Meal kits offer an excellent opportunity to explore new cuisines and learn cooking techniques. Each kit typically comes with a step-by-step recipe card that guides you through the cooking process, making it easier to try dishes you might not have attempted otherwise. This can be particularly beneficial for those who want to expand their culinary skills but may feel intimidated by

unfamiliar recipes or ingredients. Meal kits demystify the cooking process and make experimenting with new flavors and dishes an enjoyable and educational experience.

Bringing Fun Back into Cooking

Cooking can become a monotonous task, especially if you're stuck in a rut of preparing the same meals repeatedly. Meal kits can inject fun and excitement back into cooking by introducing you to new recipes and ingredients each week. The convenience of having everything you need delivered to your doorstep can also make cooking feel less like a chore and more like an enjoyable activity to look forward to. Whether you're cooking solo or with family, the process of exploring new recipes together can be a delightful way to bond and create lasting memories.

In conclusion, meal kits offer a myriad of benefits that cater to various needs and preferences. Whether you're looking to save time, reduce food waste, eat healthier, expand your culinary skills, or simply bring more enjoyment into cooking, meal kits can be a valuable addition to your lifestyle. By providing convenience, sustainability, nutritional benefits, educational opportunities, and enjoyment, meal kits have rightfully earned their place in the modern culinary landscape.

EXPERIENCE SPRING BREAK BLISS: MB2 ENTERTAINMENT'S Ultimate adventure haven

By Contributing Writer

As the sunny days of spring beckon, it's time to bid farewell to the winter blues and embrace the excitement of Spring Break. For families, thrill-seekers, and fun enthusiasts alike, look no further than MB2 Entertainment for the ultimate playground.

simply want to chill out while the kids play, MB2E has you covered. Indoors, guests can find restaurant, lounge, and bar seating, all great for catching the latest sports action. Or take advantage of the beautiful Spring days with plenty of seating and full



Nestled in the heart of Santa Clarita Valley, MB2 Entertainment stands as the premier destination for unparalleled fun that promises non-stop excitement and thrills for guests of all ages.

With a diverse range of indoor and outdoor attractions, there's something for everyone to enjoy. Indoors, guests can find a massive arcade with video, VR and prize games, an Omni Arena, laser tag, duckpin bowling, and axe throwing. Outdoors, thrill-seekers will find two karting experiences, one for racing and another for drifting, as well as Mini Golf and Bumper Boats.

Whether you've worked up an appetite

restaurant service in the Beer Garden.

What sets MB2 Entertainment apart this Spring Break season is their exclusive limited-time offer designed to maximize fun and savings for valued guests. Introducing MB2E's highly anticipated All You Can Play Pass, available for a limited time only. With this pass, guests can arrive early and enjoy 2 hours of unlimited access to many attractions, ensuring endless fun for the entire family. It's the perfect way to make the most of your Spring Break experience without breaking the bank.

But the excitement doesn't stop there. Embrace the college basketball madness with MB2 Entertainment's thrilling March

EVENTS

or Mayhem offerings including seasonal Mayhem Menu. When you aren't playing basketball in the arcade, watch it in the restaurant, at the bar or from the beer garden. Come for the HDTVs & massive projection screen, stay for hand battered onion rings, chicken fried brussels sprouts, stadium nachos, and more! MB2 Entertainment is the ultimate basketball watching experience.

And that's not all—MB2 Entertainment is also proud to offer MB2E's Play Card Bonuses, allowing guests to maximize their fun and savings with every visit. With bonuses ranging from \$10 to \$60 in added play, there's never been a better time to fuel your adventures at MB2 Entertainment. Whether you're looking to test your skills on the track or dominate the arcade, Play Card Bonuses ensure that every dollar goes further, leaving you with more memories and excitement to cherish.

But MB2 Entertainment is more than just a destination for thrill-seekers; it's a place where families come together, frier



Event Location: 17400 Victory Blvd. (between Balboa/White Oak)

Tickets Available on Eventbrite www.EncinoFoodWineFest.org

@encinofoodandwinefestival

bond, and memories are made. Their commitment to providing a safe, welcoming environment ensures that guests of all ages can relax, unwind, and create lasting memories with loved ones.

So, as you plan your Spring Break adventures, why settle for the ordinary when you can experience the extraordinary at MB2 Entertainment? With the All You Can Play Pass, March Mayhem offerings, and Play Card Bonuses, there's never been a better time to embark on the ultimate Spring Break adventure.

Join the excitement this Spring Break and discover why MB2 Entertainment is the ultimate destination for fun, excitement, and unforgettable memories. Whether you're racing to the finish line, dominating the arcade, or simply enjoying quality time with loved ones, MB2 Entertainment promises an experience like no other.

Don't miss out on the excitement—visit MB2 Entertainment today and spring into fun! Your ultimate Spring Break adventure awaits.





 orty years after "Ghostbusters" and following a string of sequels that never measured up — it's fair to wonder, well, who else ought we to call?

But as the lackluster 2021 installment, "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" showed, the half life of most film franchises today is an ever-lengthening long tail of diminishing returns. Though the options are many, sucking "Ghostbusters" dry would make a prime exhibit in Hollywood's nostalgia fix.

Still, it's not quite as simple as that. I'm glad for the female-led 2016 "Ghostbusters." It assembled the best comic ensemble since the

original with Melissa McCarthy, Kristen Wiig, Kate McKinnon, Leslie Jones and, yes, Chris Hemsworth.

And as easy as it might be to label the new one, "Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire," another

half-hashed retread ---- it's also a significant upgrade. "Frozen Empire," in New York, is a breezier, more serviceable sequel that has a modest charm.

The innate appeal of "Ghostbusters" had to do with its mixing of genres - comedy with sci-fi toys - that summoned the spirit of "Abbott of Costello Meet Frankenstein." When the sequels have gone astray, it's because they get bogged down with solemnity or special effects when all they really need is Bill Murray. I'd forgive bad visual effects than I would bland comic interplay.

"Frozen Empire," though, is organized less around a group of funny people wearing proton packs than it is around a family. The movie opens with the Ectomobile racing down Fifth Avenue with Gary (Paul Rudd) at the wheel, Callie (Carrie Coon) riding shotgun and her kids - Trevor (Finn Wolfhard) and Phoebe

(Mckenna Grace) - in the back, all in bickering pursuit of a "sewer dragon" apparition.

The cast is the same as "Afterlife," but the behind-the-scenes talent has been rejiggered. After Jason Reitman took over directing, he here is credited as a producer and writer. Gil Kenan directs "Frozen Empire," which is dedicated to the elder Reitman.

You can feel the distance from the original "Ghostbusters." Harold Ramis died in 2014 and while Murray, Dan Aykroyd and Ernie Hudson all return, they no longer feel like the

> axis to this universe. (Aykroyd, though, gives the movie some soulful quirk, and Ernie Hudson may be more a potent presence than ever.)

> Familiar-faced ghosts return, too, which, like its

predecessor, doesn't skimp on the fan service. That instinct to cater to "Ghostbusters" diehards continues to diminish a franchise that recoiled defensively.

But if you accept the low-bar aspirations of "Frozen Empire," you may get a pleasant-enough experience. It's a movie that feels more like a high production-value TV pilot than it does a big-screen event on par with the original.

The family has moved into the famed fire station, but trouble abounds. The contamination unit is stuffed, the mayor (Walter Peck) wants to evict and there are rumblings connected with an object that turns up - the Orb of Garraka that may awaken a particularly fearsome spirit.

People get slimed. Ghosts get busted. New Yorkers shrug. The formula is adhered to, albeit with a few lively twists. With this franchise, don't give up the ghost just yet.

100 By Contributing Writer

Iwood P. Dalton is a classy bouncer. While five tough guys circle him outside a bar looking to bash his skull in, he has a question for them: "Before we start, do you have insurance?" And after savagely beating each up, he drives them to the hospital.

Dalton — played by a muscular and languid Jake Gyllenhaal - is a former UFC fighter with a dark past in "Road House," a reworking of the

pulpy 1989 action film starring Patrick Swayze.

"You sure you thought this all the way through?" Dalton asks an assailant who has plunged a knife into his abdomen. The same question can be asked of the filmmakers: Is it really wise to retread this old flick? The answer is as shocking: Yes, indeed.

Gyllenhaal is a Spider-Man-meets-Jack Reacher-meets Jason Bourne, an oddball loner

with ferocious fighting abilities who makes a living in illegal fights and lives in his car, haunted by what he did to a friend. He douses booze on his open wounds and uses electrical tape instead of a bandage, yet he also oddly uses wheelie luggage. What's in the baggage? A death wish, of course.

He is lured to the Florida Keys by a roadhouse bar owner (Jessica Williams), who needs an excellent bouncer to protect her from nightly violence. He's offered \$5,000 a week to stop thugs in sleeveless jean jackets from throwing bottles, flipping tables and breaking pool cues.

"I'm hoping you're different," a bar employee says and he is. Dalton settles in the fictional Glass Key, dates a cutie, makes friends with the good folk and lives in what all damaged loners gravitate to, a houseboat. He soon

teaches the other bouncers the tricks of the trade, Zen-like, and finds reasons to take off his shirt.

Then he uncovers a conspiracy right out of "Scooby-Doo:" The land under the bar is crucial to the creation of a luxury resort dreamed up by the local rich guy and crooked cops. Basically, organized crime is trying to drive the bar owner out of business.

At this point, "Road House" gets an instant jolt of electricity from UFC fighter Conor McGregor, who

makes his acting debut as a psychotic gun-for-hire Knox. He may have one of the best intros in film history, casually walking buck naked except for a pair of boots.

Things gets a little bizarre toward the end of the movie as it starts straying from the roadhouse. Speed boats go flying, explosions go bang and someone uses arson to send a message.

Screenwriters

Anthony Bagarozzi and Charles Mondry have leaned into cliches - dead mothers, double-crosses and quirky kids. But a menacing, unstable McGregor is a gift. So is Billy Magnussen, who plays the rich boy bully . He's so evil, he throws his cellphone into the ocean, then asks an underling to retrieve it.

"The Bourne Identity" director Doug Liman seems to be having fun, his camera lingering on the chiseled beefsteak and mixing in honky tonk songs by Rockin' Dopsie Jr. & The Zydeco Twisters. The action scenes are dynamite. It knows it's silly, but it's still a good time.

That's reason enough that Liman is upset the movie is going straight to streaming. But he could rectify that. He could hire, like, an unstable, but gracious, former fighter who lives in his car.



MUSIC

ARIANA GRANDE **TRIUMPHS OVER HEARTBREAK ON ETERNAL SUNSHINE**

By Contributing Writer

op music sensation Ariana Grande has made waves again with the release of her seventh studio album, "eternal sunshine." The album, which comes on the heels of Grande's breakup with Dalton Gomez, showcases the singer's signature powerhouse vocals and emotional depth.

One of the standout tracks is "goodbye for now," a soulful ballad that sees Grande reflecting on the end of a relationship and bidding farewell. The haunting melody and heartfelt lyrics resonate with listeners who have experienced lost love, while Grande's soaring vocals elevate the song to new heights. With its raw emotion and poignant lyrics, "goodbye for now" is sure to be a fan favorite.



Another standout track is "broken but beautiful," a powerful anthem of resilience and empowerment. Grande's vocals shine as she declares her strength in the face of adversity, proving that she is not defined by her past heartbreak but strengthened by it. The uplifting chorus and soaring melody make "broken but beautiful" a standout track, showcasing Grande's ability to turn pain into power.

In contrast to the heartbreak and resilience of tracks like "goodbye for now" and "broken but beautiful," Grande also explores themes of self-discovery and empowerment on songs like "rise from the ashes" and "find your light." These tracks see Grande embracing her independence, urging listeners to embrace their own inner



strength. With empowering lyrics and infectious melodies, these songs are sure to resonate with fans and serve as anthems of self-acceptance.

Overall, "eternal sunshine" is a triumph for Grande, showcasing her growth as an artist and her ability to channel her personal experiences into music. With its blend of emotional ballads, empowering anthems, and infectious pop, the album is sure to resonate with fans old and new. Grande's vocals, heartfelt lyrics, and undeniable charisma shine through on every track.

With "eternal sunshine," Ariana Grande has once again proven herself to be a force to be reckoned with in the world of pop. The album is a testament to Grande's resilience, strength, and artistry, and serves as a captivating and emotional journey through love, loss, and self-discovery. With its powerful vocals, heartfelt lyrics, and infectious melodies, "eternal sunshine" is a must-listen for fans of Grande. Her ability to triumph over heartbreak and emerge stronger and more empowered is truly inspiring, and her talent as a singer and songwriter shines through on every track. Grande will continue to evolve and grow as an artist, and "eternal sunshine" stands as a testament to her artistry and enduring appeal.



TECH TALK WILL FLYING CARS BECOME A REALITY?

By Contributing Writer

he concept of flying cars has captivated the imagination for decades, serving as a symbol of future innovation and the pinnacle of human ingenuity. As we edge closer to making this vision a reality, it's crucial to examine the technological, regulatory, and societal hurdles. **Technological Challenges**

The primary challenge in flying cars is the development of safe, reliable, and efficient technology. Unlike traditional cars or aircraft, flying cars require a blend of capabilities. They must be versatile enough to operate in urban environments, which necessitates vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) technology, compactness to navigate through tight spaces, and the ability to safely transition between flying and driving.

Battery technology is another factor. For electric ry frameworks. Air traffic control, designe flying cars, batteries must offer sufficient power for high-altitude flight, are ill-equipped to

density to allow for reasonable distances and flight times, while also being lightweight enough not to impede performance. Innovations in materials handle the volume and complexity of low-altitude urban air mobility. Regulatory bodies will need to develop new standards for vehicle certification, pilot licensing, and traffic management to ensure safety and efficiency.



science, propulsion systems, and aerodynamics are also required while ensuring safety. **Regulatory and Infrastructure Hurdles**

The introduction of flying cars into urban landscapes will necessitate a complete overhaul of traffic management systems and regulatory frameworks. Air traffic control, designed for high-altitude flight, are ill-equipped to Moreover, the infrastructure, such as vertiports and maintenance, must be developed. This infrastructure will need to be integrated into existing urban environments without exacerbating congestion or environmental degradation, posing challenges. Societal Impact

The potential benefits of flying cars are vast, including reduced traffic congestion,

faster emergency response times, and improved mobility in remote or underserved areas. However, their introduction will also raise concerns about noise pollution, privacy, and the exacerbation of socioeconomic disparities. Ensuring equitable access to this revolutionary mode of transportation will be a crucial consideration for policymakers.

The question of public acceptance also looms large. The success of flying cars will depend not only on technological viability and regulatory support but also on the willingness of the public to embrace this new form of transportation. Concerns over safety, environmental impact, and the visual aesthetics of urban skies filled with vehicles will need to be addressed to gamer widespread support.

While the dream of flying cars is closer than ever to becoming a reality, significant challenges remain. Advances in technology, comprehensive regulatory frameworks, and societal acceptance are all critical hurdles that must be overcome. Yet, the potential benefits of flying cars — from transforming urban mobility to opening new avenues for innovation make the pursuit of this dream an exciting and worthwhile endeavor. As we stand on the cusp of this technological revolution, it's clear that the journey to flying cars will be as complex as it is transformative, requiring a concerted effort from engineers, policymakers, and society at large.





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24 BEERS YOU MUST TRY BEFORE YOU DEPART THIS LIFE

By Contributing Writer

naft beer has undergone a revolution, with brewers pushing the boundaries of taste and creativity. With styles, flavors, and brewing techniques, the world of beer offers something for everyone. Whether you're a seasoned beer connoisseur or just dipping your toes into craft brews, here are 24 beers you absolutely must try. Pliny the Elder (Russian River Brewing Company)

This double IPA is a legend among beer enthusiasts, known for its intense hoppy flavor and impeccable balance.



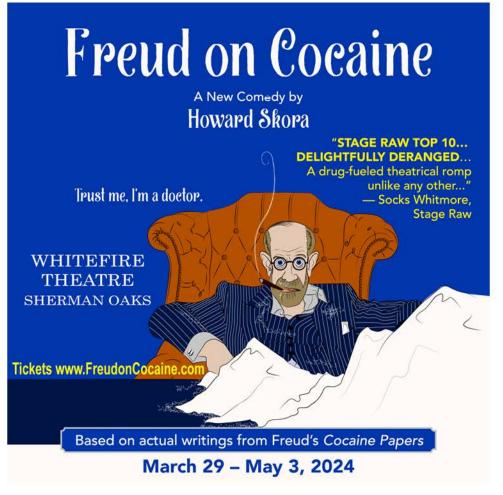
Westvleteren 12 (Brouwerij Westvleteren) Hailed as the best beer in the world, this Belgian quad is rich, complex, and utterly divine.

Trappist Rochefort 10 (Brasserie de **Rochefort**)

This quadrupel ale boasts flavors of dark fiuits, caramel, and spices, with a smooth, warming finish. The Alchemist Heady Topper

This Vermont-brewed double IPA is famous for its hazy appearance and explosive hop aroma, setting the standard for New England IPAs. **Cantillon Fou' Foune**

A masterpiece of Belgian lambic brewing, this ale is aged with apricots, resulting in a fruity delight.



Founders KBS (Kentucky Breakfast Stout)

Aged in bourbon barrels, this imperial stout features rich notes of chocolate, coffee, and vanilla, with a boozy warmth that's perfect for chilly evenings. **3 Fonteinen Oude Geuze**

A blend of young and old lambics creates a complex, sour beer with layers of funk, fruitiness, and acidity.



Samuel Adams Utopias

This extreme beer pushes the boundaries of brewing with its high alcohol content and intricate blend of flavors, including caramel, dark fruit, and oak.

Firestone Walker Parabola

Aged in bourbon barrels, this Russian imperial stout is decadently rich, with flavors of dark chocolate, espresso, and oak. Orval Trappist Ale (Brasserie d'Orval)

This iconic Belgian beer is dry-hopped and bottle-conditioned, resulting in a unique blend of fruity, spicy, and funky flavors. **Bourbon County Brand Stout (Goose** Island Beer Co.)

Another bourbon barrel-aged stout, this beer is thick, luscious, and brimming with notes of roasted malt, chocolate, and bourbon. Saison Dupont (Brasserie Dupont)

A classic farmhouse ale, this Belgian saison is refreshingly spicy, fruity, and effervescent, with a dry finish that begs for another sip. Weihenstephaner Hefeweissbier (Bayerische Staatsbrauerei Weihenstephan)

Widely regarded as one of the best wheat beers in the world, this German hefeweizen is bursting with banana, clove, and bubblegum flavors. La Fin Du Monde (Unibroue)

A Belgian-style tripel brewed in Canada, this beer is dangerously drinkable, with complex flavors of honey, spice, and fruit. **Bells Two Hearted Ale**

This American IPA showcases the beauty of simplicity, with a clean malt backbone and a burst of citrusy, piney hops.

Pilsner Urguell

The original pilsner, this Czech lager is crisp, clean, and endlessly refreshing, with a perfect balance of malt sweetness and hop bitterness. **Rodenbach Grand Cru**

A blend of young and oak-aged Flemish red ales, this beer is tart, tangy, and complex, with flavors of sour cherries, balsamic vinegar, and oak. **Deschutes The Abyss**

This imperial stout is aged in a blend of bourbon, oak, and wine barrels, resulting in a beer that's rich, boozy, and full of dark fruit and chocolate flavors. Weissenohe Monk's Fest

A traditional German doppelbock, this beer is smooth, malty, and dangerously drinkable, with notes of caramel, bread, and dark fruit.



Duvel (Brouwerij Duvel Moortgat)

This Belgian strong ale is devilishly delicious, with a pale golden color, lively carbonation, and complex flavors of fruit, spice, and earthy hops. North Coast Old Rasputin

A Russian imperial stout with a cult following, this beer is jet black and full-bodied, with intense flavors of roasted malt, coffee, and dark chocolate. Sierra Nevada Pale Ale

A pioneering beer in the craft beer movement, this American pale ale is perfectly balanced, with biscuity malt sweetness and a floral, citrusy hop character. Augustiner Bräu Lagerbier Hell

Brewed in Munich's oldest brewery, this Helles lager is crisp, clean, and incredibly drinkable, with a subtle malt sweetness and a refreshing finish. **Oskar Blues Ten FIDY**

This imperial stout is a true beast, with massive flavors of chocolate, coffee, and caramel, balanced by a hefty dose of hops and a warming alcohol presence.

From bold IPAs to complex Belgian ales, these 24 beers represent the pinnacle of brewing excellence and offer a diverse range of flavors and styles to explore. So raise a glass, savor each sip, and toast to the incredible world of beer that awaits.



CASUAL

The Culinary Delight Of Bird's Nest Soup A Treasure Trove Of Flavor And Tradition

By Contributing Writer

ird's Nest Soup is a delicacy that has captivated the culinary world for centuries, renowned for its unique texture, exquisite flavor, and purported health benefits. This rare and hxurious dish is a traditional Chinese delicacy that dates back to the Tang Dynasty, and its preparation involves the use of the nests of certain species of swiftlets. Let's delve into the fascinating world of Bird's Nest Soup, exploring its



origins, culinary significance, and the meticulous process involved in crafting this culinary masterpiece. **Origins and Harvesting**

The key ingredient of Bird's Nest Soup is the swiftlet nest, primarily sourced from the saliva of swiftlets, cave-dwelling birds found in Southeast Asia. The most coveted nests are those made by the edible-nest swiftlet (Aerodramus fuciphagus)



and the black-nest swiftlet (Aerodramus maximus). Harvesting these nests requires skilled climbers to navigate treacherous caves, often at great heights, to collect the nests without causing harm to the birds or the delicate

Culinary Significance

structures.

Bird's Nest Soup is highly prized not only for its distinctive taste but also for its perceived health benefits. In traditional Chinese medicine, it is believed to promote longevity, improve skin complexion, and boost overall well-being. Rich in nutrients such as proteins, amino acids, and minerals, the soup is considered a nourishing and rejuvenating tonic.

Preparation Process

The preparation of Bird's Nest Soup is an intricate and time-consuming process that requires precision and expertise. The nests, which are translucent and gelatinous, are soaked in water to remove impurities and then carefully cleaned. The cleaned nests are then simmered in a flavorful broth, often made with chicken or a superior stock, allowing the delicate flavors to meld. Additional ingredients like rock sugar, ginger, and sometimes ginseng are added to enhance the soup's taste and medicinal properties.

Texture and Flavor

One of the defining characteristics of Bird's Nest Soup is its unique texture – a combination of silkiness and slight chewiness. The soup is prized for its subtle, almost neutral flavor, allowing it to be paired with various ingredients while maintaining its distinct essence. It is not uncommon to find variations of the soup that include additions like shredded chicken, seafood, or even a hint of Chinese herbs, creating a harmonious balance of flavors. **Controversies and Conservation**

Despite its popularity, Bird's Nest Soup has faced criticism and ethical concerns due to the environmental impact and potential harm to swiftlet populations. Efforts have been made to promote sustainable harvesting practices and alternative farming methods to reduce the pressure on wild populations and protect these avian species.

Bird's Nest Soup stands as a testament to the intersection of culinary artistry, cultural tradition, and health-conscious dining. While its preparation may be labor-intensive and the ethical considerations surrounding its harvesting complex, the allure of this delicacy endures, offering a glimpse into the rich tapestry of gastronomy that spans centuries.



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HEALTH AND BEAUTY

EXPLORING The Health Benefits of Baking Soda

By Contributing Writer

Baking soda, a humble kitchen ingredient often used in baking and cleaning, has emerged as a versatile substance with a myriad of health benefits. Beyond its culinary and household applications, baking soda, scientifically known as sodium bicarbonate, has gained recognition for its potential to promote well-being in various aspects of our lives. **Digestive Aid**

One of the notable health benefits of baking soda lies in its ability to support digestion. When consumed in moderation, baking soda acts as an antacid, neutralizing excess stomach acid and alleviating indigestion. Its alkaline nature helps balance the body's pH levels, providing relief from heartburn and acid reflux. However, it is crucial to consult with a healthcare professional before using baking soda for digestive issues. **Oral Health**

Baking soda's mild abrasive properties make it a popular natural remedy for maintaining oral health. Mixing a small amount of baking soda with water to form a paste can serve as an effective toothpaste alternative. This practice may help remove plaque, reduce stains, and neutralize harmful acids, contributing to fresher breath and healthier gums. **Skin Care**

Baking soda's gentle exfoliating and anti-inflammatory properties make it a valuable addition to skincare routines. A baking soda paste can be applied topically to



soothe insect bites, relieve sunburn, and exfoliate the skin. Its alkaline nature also helps regulate the skin's pH, preventing conditions like acne by inhibiting the growth of bacteria. **Muscle Pain Relief**

After a strenuous workout, a baking soda bath can be a

rejuvenating experience. Adding baking soda to a warm bath helps relax muscles, reduce soreness, and promote overall well-being. Its alkaline properties may assist in balancing lactic acid levels, which contribute to muscle fatigue.

UTI Relief

Baking soda has been suggested as a potential remedy for urinary tract infections (UTIs) due to its ability to create an alkaline environ-



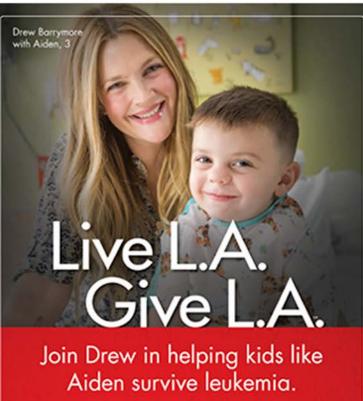
ment in the body. However, it is crucial to approach this with caution and consult a healthcare professional for proper diagnosis and guidance.

Detoxification

Baking soda has been explored for its potential role in supporting the body's detoxification processes. Some proponents claim that drinking a diluted solution of baking soda and water may help neutralize toxins and promote a healthy internal environment. Nevertheless, this should be approached with caution, and consulting a healthcare professional is advised.

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While baking soda undeniably offers a range of health benefits, it is essential to use it judiciously and under proper guidance. Incorporating small amounts of baking soda into daily routines can contribute to improved digestive health, enhanced oral hygiene, and relief from various ailments. As with any home remedy, consulting healthcare professionals ensures safe and effective use, unlocking the full potential of this unassuming kitchen staple in promoting overall well-being.



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ONSTAGE

NICHE STAGE PRODUCTIONS THE STORIES OF THREE UNUSUAL CRIMES

By Contributing Writer

iche Stage Productions debuts with the performances of three unusual crimes. A Story As Old As Time

A new mummy has arrived at Brooklyn Museum, and now, young women are dying on the streets of Park Slope. Detective Sergeant Ben Guitierrez is assigned to shadow the investigation. Can he solve this riddle, wrapped in a mystery, inside an enigma? Can you?

Written by Neil L. Yuzuk & Directed by Aline Humbert. Players are: Andres Garcia, Clement Tng Bowen, Joshua Tracy, Kim Campbell, Mattie Helton, and Yoni Baevsky. Murder In Malibu & The Case Of The **Gypsy's Kidnapped Daughter**

In a home invasion in Malibu, one perp is killed, and the others have escaped. From his home in Beachside, Florida, Detective Lieutenant Mike Zaragossa leads the hunt for the Gypsy gang-after all, his nickname is the Gypsy Hunter. Based on a real case, the truth can be stranger than fiction. The players are: Clement Tng Bowen,



Mike Zaragossa, best known for hunting Romani criminals for crimes ranging from simple scams to murder, is asked to investigate the case of Angela Howard, a two-year old Romani Gypsy who has been missing for two years. She was kidnapped, and the trail is colder than a penguin's butt. Can Zaragossa find Angela and bring justice to the Howard family? Based on a real case from the files of the Gypsy Hunter.

Written & Directed by Neil L. Yuzuk.

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EXPLORING AMERICA'S WILD WEST

GREAT ESCAPES

By Contributing Writer

The Wild West, with its expansive landscapes, rugged terrains, and tales of adventure, has long captured the imagination of those looking to explore the untamed parts of America. Today, trailblazing getaways in the Wild West offer a unique blend of adventure, history, and breathtaking natural beauty. Here's a closer look at some of the most captivating destinations that continue to draw adventurers from around the globe. the sunrise bathe the buttes in a golden glow or exploring the intricate formations, Monument Valley epitomizes the untamed spirit of the West. **Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming**

Yellowstone, the first national park in the U.S. and arguably the world, offers a different kind of wild beauty. Known for its geothermal features, including the famous Old Faithful geyser, Yellowstone spans over two million acres of sprawling wilderness. It's a haven for wildlife enthusiasts, with opportunities to spot bison, elk, wolves, and bears in their natural habitat. The park's vast network of trails caters to all levels of hikers, making it an ideal destination for those looking to immerse themselves in the unspoiled natural beauty of the West. **Ghost Towns of Nevada**

For a taste of the Wild West's storied past, one can venture into the ghost towns that pepper the landscape of Nevada. Once



Monument Valley, Arizona & Utah

Monument Valley is perhaps one of the most iconic symbols of the American West. Straddling the border between Arizona and Utah, this vast, barren landscape is punctuated by towering sandstone buttes, some reaching heights of up to 1,000 feet. Visitors can explore the valley through guided tours, many of which are led by Navajo guides, offering insights into the rich cultural heritage of the area. Whether it's watching



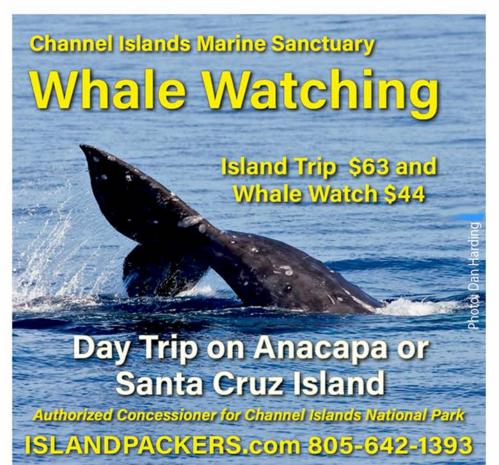
booming with mining activity, these abandoned settlements offer a glimpse into the life and times of those who sought fortune in the West. Towns like Rhyolite and Goldfield stand as eerie yet fascinating testaments to the boom-and-bust cycles of mining. Exploring these ghost towns, visitors can wander among dilapidated buildings, old mines, and deserted streets, feeling the echoes of the past under the vast desert sky. **The Grand Canyon, Arizona**

No exploration of the Wild West would be complete without a visit to the Grand Canyon. Carved over millions of years by the Colorado River, this immense natural wonder stretches over 277 miles, with depths of over a mile in some places. Hiking down into the canyon, rafting on the river, or simply taking in the views from the rim, visitors are treated to a spectacle of



geological history and natural beauty. The Grand Canyon is not just a destination; it's an experience, offering a profound sense of scale and a connection to the natural world.

The Wild West holds an allure that goes beyond the tales of cowboys and outlaws. It's in the vast, open landscapes, the rugged beauty of its natural wonders, and the remnants of its tumultuous history. Trailblazing getaways in the Wild West offer adventurers the chance to step into these stories, to experience the majesty of the American wilderness, and to forge their own tales of adventure against the backdrop of one of the most iconic landscapes in the world. Whether it's the silent majesty of Monument Valley, the geothermal wonders of Yellowstone, the eerie beauty of Nevada's ghost towns, or the awe-inspiring grandeur of the Grand Canyon, the Wild West invites you to explore, to dream, and to discover.



Cool Celebrity Tattoos

Meaningful Symbols To Intricate Artwork

By Contributing Writer

attoos have long been a form of self-expression, and celebrities often lead the way. From subtle symbols to bold statements, celebrity tattoos not only showcase personal stories but also inspire fans worldwide.



Tiny Tattoos with Big Meanings Celebrities like Ariana Grande and Selena Gomez have popularized small, delicate tattoos with profound meanings. Whether it's a tiny heart, a word written in script, or a symbol, these minimalist designs pack a powerful punch. Grande's bee tattoo, symbolizing the city of Manchester, is a poignant example. Nature-inspired Artwork

From intricate floral to animal portraits, nature-themed tattoos continue to captivate. Stars like Miley Cyrus and Cara Delevingne sport botanical designs and wildlife motifs, often incorporating vibrant colors and intricate details. These tattoos reflect a connection to environmental causes.

Geometric and Abstract Designs

For those seeking a modern twist, geometric and abstract designs offer a fresh aesthetic. Celebrities like Justin Bieber and Demi Lovato have embraced this trend. These tattoos often have open-ended interpretations. **Cultural and Spiritual Symbols**

Many celebrities draw inspiration from their cultural heritage or spiritual beliefs. From ancient symbols to religious icons, these tattoos serve as reminders of identity and values. For instance, Rihanna's intricate hand tattoos reflect her diverse cultural influences and spiritual journey. **Collaborative and Matching Tattoos**

Matching tattoos have become increasingly popular. Whether it's a symbol of friendship, love, or shared experiences, these tattoos strengthen bonds and create memories. Famous examples include matching tattoos sported by the Kardashian-Jenner family and friendship tattoos shared by actors Sophie Turner and Maisie Williams. **Watercolor Masterpieces**

Watercolor tattoos have gained popularity among celebrities seeking a unique look. Stars like Lady Gaga and Katy Perry have adorned their bodies with vibrant watercolor tattoos, featuring abstract designs or landscapes. These tattoos blur the line between body art and fine art. **Blackwork and Dotwork**

Blackwork and dotwork tattoos rely on intricate patterns and precise linework. Celebrities such as Zayn Malik and Ruby Rose have



embraced this style, incorporating geometric shapes, mandalas, and ornamental motifs.

Celebrity tattoos offer a glimpse into the ever-evolving world of body art, where creativity knows no bounds. From tiny symbols with profound meanings to elaborate masterpieces, these designs inspire individuals to express themselves boldly and authentically. There's a celebrity tattoo trend to suit every style and sensibility.

CELEBRITY NEWS



INDEPENDENT RADIO



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BUSY BODY

EXCITING **NEW EVENTS DEBUT AT THE 2024** PARIS OLYMPICS

By Contributing Writer

s anticipation builds for the 2024 Paris Olympics, sports enthusiasts around the globe are eagerly awaiting the debut of several thrilling new events. With a focus on innovation, inclusivity, and sustainability, the Paris Games promise to showcase the very best of athletic prowess and creativity. Let's explore some of the exciting additions that will make their first appearance on the Olympic stage in 2024.



breaking. As a dynamic and expressive form of street dance, breaking has gained global popularity and is set to make its Olympic debut in Paris. Athletes will compete

Breakdancing (Breaking)

breakdancing, also known as

One of the most anticipated

additions to the Olympic lineup is

the Olympic Games, appealing to a younger and more diverse audience. **Skateboarding Park and Street**

in electrifying battles, showcasing

their agility, creativity, and style as

roots in urban culture, breakdancing

they perform intricate moves to

the beat of the music. With its

Building on the success of skateboarding's debut at the Tokyo

Olympics, Paris 2024 will feature both park and street disciplines. Skateboarding's inclusion reflects the Olympic Committee's commitment to embracing action sports and reaching out to new generations of athletes. In the park event, competitors will navigate a course featuring



ramps, bowls, and obstacles, while the street event will challenge athletes to perform tricks on urban-inspired terrain such as rails, stairs, and ledges. With its emphasis on creativity and individual style, skateboarding promises to bring an exciting urban edge to the Olympic stage.

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Sport Climbing

Another sport making its Olympic debut in Paris is sport climbing, which combines three distinct disciplines: lead climbing, speed climbing, and bouldering. Athletes will compete in all three disciplines, with the final rankings determined by a combined score. From scaling vertical walls to solving complex bouldering problems, sport climbing tests athletes' strength, technique, and mental focus. With its growing popularity and universal appeal, sport climbing adds a thrilling new dimension to the Olympic program, showcasing the athleticism and versatility of climbers from around the world. Surfing

Surfing will also make its second appearance at the Olympics in Paris, following its successful debut at the Tokyo Games. Athletes will compete in a series of heats, riding waves and performing maneuvers to impress the judges. Whether carving graceful turns or executing aerial tricks, surfers will showcase their skill and style in the quest for Olympic glory. With its deep connection to nature and the ocean, surfing embodies the spirit of adventure and exploration, making it a perfect fit for the Olympic stage. **Mixed Team Relay in Athletics**

In a bid to promote gender equality and teamwork, the Paris Olympics will introduce the mixed team relay in athletics. Teams consisting of both male and female athletes will compete together in relay events such as the 4x400 meters, offering a dynamic and inclusive addition to the track and field program. The mixed relay format not only highlights the collective strength of teams but also celebrates the diversity and cooperation inherent in sport.

The 2024 Paris Olympics promise to deliver a spectacle of athletic excellence and innovation, with the introduction of exciting new events that reflect the evolving landscape of sports. From the raw energy of breakdancing to the adrenaline-fueled action of skateboarding and surfing, these additions will captivate audiences and inspire athletes to push the boundaries of what is possible. As the world comes together to celebrate the Olympic spirit, Paris 2024 will undoubtedly leave a lasting legacy of inclusivity, creativity, and sporting achievement.

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Decoding Cat Tails! Learning To Understand Your Cat

By Contributing Writer

ats are known for their mysterious and enigmatic nature, often leaving their owners wondering what exactly is going on in their furry minds. While vocalizations and body language play significant roles in feline communication, one often overlooked aspect is the language of their tails. Indeed, a cat's tail can convey a wealth of informa-



tion about their mood, intentions, and overall well-being. Let's delve into the fascinating world of "cat tail speak" and learn how to decipher the messages our feline friends are sending us. **The Erect Tail**

When a cat holds its tail straight up in the air, it's typically a sign of confidence, contentment, and a friendly greeting. This posture often accompanies a happy and relaxed cat, ready for interaction and affection. **The Swishing Tail**

A cat's tail swishing back and forth rapidly can indicate agitation, irritation, or even aggression. This behavior may be seen when a cat is feeling threatened, annoyed, or in an uncomfortable situation. It's essential to give the cat space and avoid provoking further stress. **The Puffed-Up Tail**

When a cat's tail puffs up to appear larger than usual, it's a clear sign of fear, anxiety, or feeling threatened. This defensive posture is often accompanied by



arched back and flattened ears, indicating that the cat is on high alert and ready to defend itself if necessary. **The Tucked Tail**

A cat tucking its tail between its legs is a sign of submission, insecurity, or fear. This behavior is often seen in cats who are feeling overwhelmed or intimidated by their surroundings or other animals. It's essential to provide reassurance and create a safe environment for the cat to alleviate their anxiety. The Twitching Tail Tip

A slight twitching of the tail tip can indicate curiosity or excitement. This behavior is commonly observed when a cat is focused on something intriguing or playful, such as a toy or a bird outside the window. It's a sign that the cat is engaged and ready to pounce. **The Slow Wagging Tail**

Unlike the rapid swishing associated with agitation, a slow wagging

PETPOURRIE

of the tail can indicate uncertainty or indecision. It's often seen when a cat is assessing a situation or considering its next move. Pay attention to other body language cues to understand the cat's emotional state fully. Understanding the language of cat tails can deepen the bond between cats and their owners, allowing for better communication and empathy. By paying attention to subtle tail movements and accompanying body



The Curled Tail

When a cat wraps its tail around its body or an object, it's a sign of comfort, security, and relaxation. This behavior is seen when a cat is curled up for a nap or lounging in a favorite spot. The cat feels safe and at ease in its environment.

language, we can gain valuable insights into our feline companions' thoughts and feelings. So the next time your cat flicks its tail, take a moment to observe and appreciate the message they're conveying—it might just strengthen your connection with your furry friend.



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Exotic And Expensive! The World's Most Prized Spices And Herbs

By Contributing Writer

Spices and herbs have been treasured for centuries, not only for their culinary value but also for their medicinal properties, cultural significance, and sometimes their scarcity. From the vibrant hues of saffron to the pungent aroma of vanilla, these prized ingredients add depth, flavor, and

a distinctively earthy, floral flavor. Its labor-intensive cultivation process, which involves hand-picking the tiny threads from thousands of flowers, contributes to its high price tag. Saffron is prized for its culinary versatility, adding depth and complexity to dishes ranging from paella and risotto to desserts like saffron-infused ice cream and cakes.

Vanilla

With its sweet, floral aroma and rich, creamy flavor, vanilla is a beloved spice that adds warmth and depth to a wide range of dishes. Derived from the pods of the vanilla orchid, vanilla is labor-intensive to cultivate and harvest, driving up its price. The highest quality vanilla beans, known as Bourbon vanilla, are sourced from Madagascar, where the unique climate and soil conditions produce beans with unparalleled flavor and aroma. Vanilla is a staple ingredient in baking, confectionery, and dessert-making, lending its distinctive flavor to everything from cakes and cookies to custards and ice creams. **Cardamom**

A prized spice in Indian, Middle Eastern, and Scandinavian cuisines, cardamom is revered for its complex flavor profile and



aroma to dishes around the globe. Here are some of the most exotic and expensive spices and herbs that have captivated the senses and tantalized taste buds for generations. **Saffron**

Known as the king of spices, saffron reigns supreme as one of the most expensive and coveted spices in the world. Derived from the delicate threads of the Crocus sativus flower, saffron boasts a rich golden hue and aromatic fragrance. The seeds of the cardamom plant are ground into a powder or used whole in both sweet and savory dishes. Green cardamom, with its fresh, citrusy notes, is the most common variety, while black cardamom offers a smoky, earthy flavor that pairs well with hearty dishes like curries and stews. Cardamom's versatility and distinctive flavor make it a prized ingredient in everything from chai tea and spiced desserts to savory rice dishes and meat marinades.

FINER THINGS

Truffles

Often referred to as the "diamonds of the kitchen," truffles are a rare and highly prized delicacy that fetches exorbitant prices in culinary markets around the world. These subterranean fungi grow underground, typically near the roots of certain tree species, and are prized for their intense aroma and earthy, umami-rich flavor. Truffles are notoriously difficult to cultivate, with skilled truffle hunters relying on specially trained dogs or pigs to sniff out the elusive fungi. White truffles from Italy and black truffles from France are among the most sought-after varieties, commanding prices that can exceed thousands of dollars per pound. Truffles are typically shaved or grated over pasta, risotto, eggs, or other dishes to impart their distinctive flavor and aroma. Kopi Luwak Coffee

Widely regarded as the world's most expensive coffee, Kopi Luwak is not your typical brew. This Indonesian delicacy is made from coffee beans that have been eaten, digested, and excreted by the Asian palm civet, a small mammal native to Southeast Asia. The fermentation process that occurs in the civet's digestive tract is said to impart a unique flavor profile to the coffee beans, resulting



in a smooth, rich brew with hints of chocolate and caramel. Kopi Luwak is prized by coffee afficionados for its rarity and distinctive flavor, with prices often exceeding several hundred dollars per pound.

These exotic and expensive spices and herbs represent the pinnacle of culinary luxury, prized for their unique flavors, aromas, and cultural significance. While their high price tags may put them out of reach for many, the opportunity to experience the sensory delights of these prized ingredients is a rare and unforgettable treat for those fortunate enough to indulge.





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Elevate Backyard Entertainment

DIY Outdoor Bar Ideas

By Contributing Writer

s the weather warms up and outdoor gatherings become frequent, having a designated outdoor bar area can take your backyard to the next level. Whether you're hosting a barbecue, a pool party, or simply enjoying drinks with



friends under the stars, a well-designed outdoor bar adds style, convenience, and functionality. Here are some creative DIY outdoor bar ideas. **Pallet Bar**

One of the simplest and most cost-effective DIY outdoor bar options is a pallet bar. Repurpose wooden pallets to construct a rustic bar counter, then add shelves for glasses, bottles, and bar accessories. You can customize the size and shape of the bar to fit your space, and even paint the pallets. **Tiki Bar**

Transport yourself to a tropical paradise with a tiki bar. Use bamboo poles or reclaimed wood to construct the bar frame, then add thatched roofing for an island vibe. Decorate the bar with tiki torches, tropical plants, and colorful lanterns. **Fold-Down Bar**

If space is limited, consider a fold-down bar that can be easily tucked away. Mount a wooden plank to the exterior wall of your house or fence, then attach hinges to allow the plank to fold down into a bar counter. When folded up, the bar takes up minimal space, but when opened, it provides room for serving drinks and snacks. **Concrete Bar**

For a sleek outdoor bar design, consider using concrete. Construct a simple concrete countertop supported by a wooden or metal frame, then polish the surface. Add built-in shelves or cabinets for storage, and consider incorporating a built-in sink. **Repurposed Furniture Bar**

Get creative with repuposed furniture. Convert an old dresser, bookshelf, or kitchen cart into a stylish bar by adding paint, decorative hardware, and a waterproof sealant to protect the surface. Use the existing drawers or shelves for storage, and add hooks or racks for hanging glasses and utensils. **Pallet Outdoor Bar with Cooler**

Combine functionality of a bar with the convenience of a cooler by building a pallet outdoor bar with a built-in cooler. Use pallets to construct the bar frame, leaving one section open to insert a drop-in cooler or metal tub. This allows you to keep drinks cold and easily accessible. **Bar Cart Station**

> For a portable outdoor bar solution, repurpose a bar cart or utility cart into a mobile serving station. Stock the cart with beverages, glassware, and bar accessories, then wheel it o your patio, deck, or poolside. When not in use, simply roll the cart back inside.



Fire Pit Bar

Combine two backyard essentials into one with a fire pit bar. Construct a circular bar counter around a built-in fire pit, creating a cozy gathering spot where guests can enjoy drinks and conversation. Add bar stools or built-in seating for comfortable lounging.

Whether you prefer a rustic pallet bar or a sleek concrete counter, there are endless DIY outdoor bar ideas to suit every style and budget. With a little creativity and ingenuity, you can transform your backyard into the ultimate entertainment destination, perfect for hosting memorable gatherings with family and friends. Cheers!

HOME AND STYLE

Aldik Home

By Contributing Writer

A ldik Home stands as a distinguished name in the realm of home decor, known for offering an extensive selection of quality, stylish, and affordable home furnishings and accessories. This retail entity has carved a niche for itself by providing products that not only enhance the



aesthetic appeal of homes but also cater to the practical needs of its customers. In this article, we delve into the essence of Aldik Home, exploring its history, product range, customer experience, and the values that set it apart in the competitive landscape of home decoration. **The Genesis and Evolution**

Aldik Home's journey began with a simple vision: to bring beauty, comfort, and style to every home without the hefty price tag often associated with high-end decor. Over the years, Aldik Home has expanded its footprint, evolving from a modest establishment into a well-regarded name in the home decor industry. The brand's growth is a testament to its commitment to quality, innovation, and customer satisfaction. **Diverse Product Range**

Aldik Home's product catalog is a testament to its commitment to diversity and quality. The store offers everything from luxurious artificial flowers and plants, which have become a signature offering, to seasonal decorations, home furnishings, lighting solutions, and outdoor decor. Whether customers are looking to revamp their living space, create a cozy atmosphere, or add a touch of elegance to their outdoor areas, Aldik Home provides a one-stop solution to all their decor needs. **Customer-Centric Experience**

At the heart of Aldik Home's success is its unwavering dedication to providing an exceptional shopping experience. The brand goes beyond merely selling products; it aims to inspire its customers. Each store is meticulously ananged, displaying products in a way that customers can easily envision in their own homes. Additionally, Aldik Home's staff are not just salespeople; they are home decor enthusiasts who offer personalized advice, helping customers select the perfect items that reflect their style and meet their needs. **Sustainability and Community Engagement**

In recent years, Aldik Home has increasingly focused on sustainability, recognizing the importance of environmentally friendly practices in retail. The company strives to offer products made from sustainable materials and encourages its suppliers to adopt eco-friendly production methods. Furthermore, Aldik Home is committed to community

engagement, participating in local events and



supporting charitable causes, thus strengthening its bond with the communities it serves. **Navigating Challenges and Embracing the Future**

Like any retail business, Aldik Home has faced its share of challenges, including economic fluctuations and the rapidly changing retail landscape. However, its ability to adapt and innovate has allowed it to remain relevant and continue to thrive. Looking ahead, Aldik Home is poised to embrace the digital revolution, expanding its online presence and exploring new ways to enhance the digital shopping experience, while maintaining the personal touch that customers have come to love.

Aldik Home is more than just a home decor retailer; it is a brand that believes in beautifying living spaces while fostering a sense of community and sustainability. Its diverse product range, commitment to customer satisfaction, and dedication to quality and innovation have cemented its position as a beloved destination for home decor enthusiasts. As Aldik Home continues to evolve, it remains focused on its mission to bring style, comfort, and beauty into every home, proving that great design is accessible to all.

NEWS OF THE WEIRD

By Andrews McMeel Syndication

Deputy chief physician of pediatric neurosurgery Dr. Li at Hangzhou Children's Hospital in China shared a video on social media on March 11 after a baby boy was born sporting a 4-inch-long tail, WION reported. The doctor suspected a condition called a tethered spinal cord, which means the spinal cord is abnormally connected to surrounding tissues, typically at the base of the spine. Doctors advised against removing the tail, as doing so might result in irreversible damage.

Three boys, aged 11, 12 and 16, were taken into custody on March 19 after they robbed a Wells Fargo bank in Houston on March 15, KTRK-TV reported. The kids handed a threatening note to a bank teller; the Harris County Sheriff's Office believes they were armed, but they did not present a weapon. After the FBI released surveillance footage, parents of two of the boys identified them. The "little rascals," as they've been dubbed, are facing second-degree felony charges. "The age of the younger two, that's unusual for a bank robbery," noted Mike Schneider, a retired juvenile district court judge.

A 23-year-old Frenchman will get to stay a little longer in Norway than he anticipated after racking up 25 speeding tickets in just 19 days, Yahoo! News reported. The Oslo district court called the speeder a "danger in traffic" and sentenced him to 24 days in prison, which was reduced to 21 days when he pleaded guilty. Most of the infractions were caught on fixed speed cameras, which the driver was unaware of. He was also relieved of his driver's license.

Mexican artist Chavis Marmol, 42, carved a giant head from stone, inspired by the carvings of the Olmec people, and then lowered it onto a used Tesla 3 using a crane, France24 reported. The art installation, in a vacant lot in Mexico City, was intended to "troll Elon Musk," said the artist. "Look what I do to your lousy car with this wonderful head. This is bigger than you and the rampant technologies." Tesla has recently announced a plan to build a factory in northern Mexico. "It's the wonderful thing about art, it allows you these atrocities," said Marmol. [France24,

Family Values

-- Alyssa Langley and Timothy Stephens, both 27, were arrested in Daytona Beach, Florida, on March 16 after they both passed out on the beach, leaving their two children to wander to a nearby hotel pool, ClickOrlando reported. When the Volusia County Sheriff's deputy asked where the children were, Stephens walked toward the ocean, calling for them, and saying "They're at the beach." He later tried to run away but fell on the beach and appeared unconscious. He faces charges of child neglect, alcohol possession and attempt to escape custody; Langley faces child neglect charges. The kids were unharmed.

Across

4. Saints QB

9. Plead for

1. Hobby shop buy

12. Wedding vow

14. Junior, e.g.

16. Inflexible

17. Venus de M_

18. Property wrecker

20. Time to be home

22. Native Americans

23. Martini addition

27. Bankworker

32. Bring home

33. Metal bars

38. Commit perjury

39. ____ a good plan!

40. Broad spreading tree

50. Promise of a payback

53. Drug in "The Good Shepherd"

36. Virilitypill

47. Song

48. Drive back

51. __ publica

52. Arachnids

54. Explosive

56. Okay!

Down

55. Hot dance

1. Ukraine city

4. Harangue

6. Bird-to-be

7. Evoke

8. Charm

21. Let go

5. Chewed out

9. "Like, no way!"

10. The only one

11. Befamiliarwith

19. Economic condition

24. Pressure unit: Abbr.

people power is held by two

2. It comes to mind

3. Unable to decide

31. Trade

24. Used a spring stick

13. Colonel's insignia

15. Poetic contraction

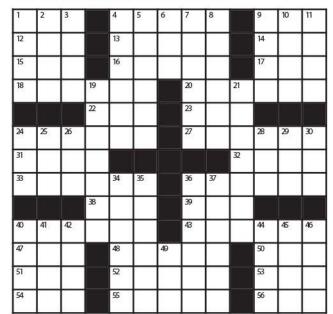
-- Police in Riverside, California, arrested Samuel Davalos Pasillas, 47 -- who claimed to be a pastor in Victorville -- in late March for hiring two men to kill his daughter's boyfriend, ABC7-TV reported. The hitmen surveilled the victim for months before the shooting, which took place on Oct. 21, 2023. As the victim sat in his car, they drove up next to him and shot him, wounding him. Police also arrested Juan Manuel Cebreros, 55, of Long Beach; they are still looking for Jesus Abel Felix Garcia. The church's real pastor, Rafael Porras, told reporters that Pasillas was a volunteer, not a pastor.

The World Health Organization reported that leprosy is on the rise, particularly in Florida, Newsweek reported on March 22. The number of infections has more than doubled in the last 10 years, and the disease is often associated with exposure to ... armadillos. About a fifth of the U.S. cases were reported in Florida. "People may become infected from other people with untreated leprosy or from the nine-banded armadillo, a natural host of the bacteria causing the disease," said Francisca Mutapi, co-director of the Global Health Academy at the University of Edinburgh.

An employee of Chilthern Railways in the United Kingdom is marking the 125th birthday of the Marylebone station -- and her own 20th anniversary with the railroad -- by changing her name to Rehana

Crossword by Myles Mellor

Print this Page! Ctrl + P



25. Have legal possession of 26. Muzzle 28. Not be upto-date 43. Poetic syllable arrangements 29. Miss the mark 30. H.S. biology topic 34. Head adornments 35. Nero's tutor 36. Snakes

37. Bologna home 40. Low quality diamond

- 41. Part of Yemen
- 42. Snug retreat
- 44. Unctuous
- 45. Honker
- 46. Washing up water
- 49. Sidekick

Dad Jokes.... Why was 6 afraid of 7? Because 7, 8, 9.



Last Week's Answers

¹ K	²	³ T		⁴ B	⁵ R	⁶ E	⁷ E	⁸ S		⁹ A	¹⁰ S	¹¹ K
¹²	D	0		¹³ E	Α	G	L	E		¹⁴ S	0	N
¹⁵ E	Е	R		¹⁶ R	L.	G	I.	D		¹⁷ I	L	0
¹⁸ V	Α	Ν	¹⁹ D	Α	L		²⁰ C	U	²¹ R	F	E	w
			²² U	Т	E		²³	С	E			
²⁴ P	²⁵ O	²⁶ G	0	Е	D		²⁷ T	E	L	²⁸ L	²⁹ E	³⁰ R
³¹ S	w	Α	Р						³² E	A	R	Ν
³³	N	G		³⁴ T	³⁵ S		³⁶ V	³⁷ I	A	G	R	Α
			³⁸ L	1	E		³⁹ I	T	S			
⁴⁰ B	⁴¹ A	⁴² N	Y	Α	N		⁴³ P	A	E	⁴⁴ 0	45 N	⁴⁶ S
⁴⁷ O	D	Е		⁴⁸ R	E	⁴⁹ P	E	L		⁵⁰	0	U
⁵¹ R	E	s		⁵² A	С	Α	R	I.		53 L	s	D
⁵⁴ T	N	Т		⁵⁵ S	Α	$\langle L \rangle$	s	A		⁵⁶ Y	E	S

After School & Spring Camps - Enroll Early!



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In the wake of tragic school shootings, Gen

Z is rallying for stricter gun control. They are

KIDS FORUM Unveiling The Heart Of Gen Z

Top Concerns And Issues Teens Care About

By Contributing Writer

n the landscape of societal priorities, the voices of Generation Z, born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, are ringing loud and clear. This dynamic and diverse generation is advocating for a world that reflects their values. **Climate Crisis**

Gen Z has inherited a planet facing environmental challenges, and they are aware of their role in shaping its future. Climate change tops the list of concerns for teens, as they witness the devastating impact of extreme weather events,. This generation is pushing for sustainable practices, renewable energy, and policies that prioritize environmental conservation.



Social Justice

Social justice and equality lies at the core of Gen Z's values. Issues like racial inequality, gender discrimination, and LGBTQ+ rights

are championed by teens who strive for a

Protests, social media, and grassroots move-

world that embraces diversity and inclusivity.

ments led by Gen Z are shaping conversations and prompting positive changes. Mental Health Awareness

Gen Z is breaking the stigma surrounding mental health. The pressures of the digital age, academic expectations, and the challenges of a rapidly changing world contribute to a focus on mental

well-being. Teens are advocating for destigma-

tization, increased access to mental health resources.

and the integration of mental health education.

using their voices to challenge existing policies and advocate for legislative changes. Grassroots movements like March for Our Lives, led by young activists, have gained significant traction. **Political Engagement**

Gun Control

Gen Z is actively participating in political discourse. The internet and social media platforms serve as powerful tools for political awareness. Teens are advocating for issues such as affordable education, healthcare, and fair economic policies. **Technology and Privacy**

Gen Z is concerned about privacy issues and ethical use of technology. They question the impact of surveillance, data breaches, and the potential misuse of personal information. **Global Health**

COVID-19 has underscored the importance of global health for Gen Z. Teens are involved in spreading awareness, advocating for vaccine equity, and supporting initiatives to address health disparities.

The issues that Gen Z cares about reflect their commitment to creating a more equitable, sustainable, and compassionate world. This generation is actively shaping the narrative around their future.



THE RISE OF EXTREME SPORTS AMONG KIDS Too Extreme Or Just Right?

By Contributing Writer

xtreme sports have long been associated with adrenaline junkies seeking the ultimate thrill. However, in recent years, there has been a noticeable surge in the participation of children in these high-risk activities. From skateboarding and mountain biking to rock climbing and parkour, youngsters are increasingly drawn to the excitement and challenges offered by extreme sports. But as the popularity of these activities grows, so too do concerns about the networks that extend beyond the sport itself. One factor driving the increase in youth participation is the greater accessibility of extreme sports facilities and resources. Skate parks, bike trails, and climbing gyms are becoming more prevalent in cities and suburbs, providing safe environments for kids to practice and develop their skills under supervision. Additionally, advances in equipment technology and protective gear have made these activities safer and more appealing to parents concerned about their children's safety.

However, despite these advancements, the inherent risks associated with extreme sports cannot be ignored. The potential for serious injury, including broken bones, concussions, and spinal cord injuries, is ever-present, even with proper training and safety precautions in place. Unlike traditional team sports where rules and regulations govern play, extreme sports often take place in uncontrolled environments, increasing the unpredictability and danger factor.

Moreover, there is a concern that the culture of extreme sports glamorizes risk-tak-



safety and well-being of young participants.

The appeal of extreme sports for kids is undeniable. In a world saturated with screens and digital distractions, these activities offer a refreshing opportunity to unplug, get outdoors, and test physical limits. They provide an avenue for self-expression, creativity, and personal growth, fostering qualities like resilience, perseverance, and confidence. Moreover, the camaraderie and sense of community within the extreme sports scene can be invaluable for young athletes, offering friendship and support ing behavior and downplays the importance of safety. Kids may be influenced by images and videos of professional athletes performing death-defying stunts, leading them to underestimate the potential consequences of their actions. This can create a dangerous mindset where pushing boundaries and seeking thrills take precedence over responsible decision-making and risk assessment.

Parents, educators, and policymakers are grappling with how to strike the right balance between allowing children to pursue their passions and ensuring their safety. While some

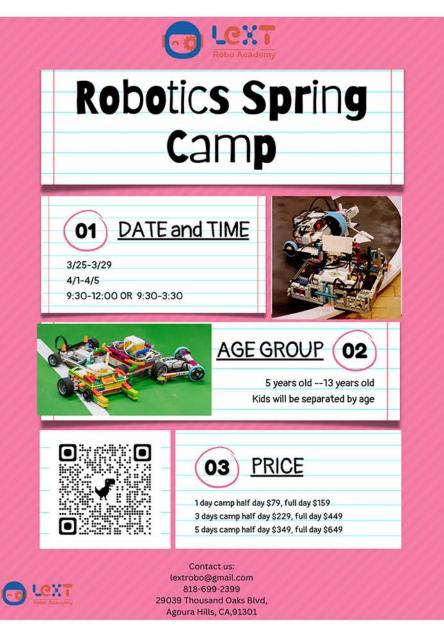


advocate for greater regulation and supervision in extreme sports, others argue that risk-taking is an inherent part of childhood development and that overly restrictive measures can stifle creativity and personal growth.

Ultimately, the key lies in education and empowerment. Parents should actively engage with their children about the risks and rewards of participating in extreme sports, emphasizing the importance of proper training, supervision, and safety equipment. Coaches and instructors play a crucial role in teaching young athletes the fundamentals of risk management and injury prevention, instilling in them a respect for their own physical limitations and those of their peers.

Furthermore, advances in technology are enabling researchers to better understand the biomechanics of extreme sports injuries and develop innovative strategies for injury prevention and rehabilitation. For example, wearable sensors and head-mounted cameras can provide valuable insights into the mechanics of falls and impacts, informing the design of safer equipment and training protocols.

The increasing participation of children in extreme sports raises important questions about safety, responsibility, and risk management. While the allure of these activities is undeniable, it is essential to approach them with caution and foresight, prioritizing the well-being and development of young athletes above all else. By fostering a culture of safety, education, and empowerment, we can ensure that kids can enjoy the thrills of extreme sports while minimizing the associated risks.



FASHIDN The Peculiar Parade

History's Weirdest Fashion Trends

By Contributing Writer

ashion is an expression of culture, identity, and creativity, often pushing the boundaries. Throughout history, there have been countless fashion trends that have raised



eyebrows, sparked controversy, and left us wondering, "What were they thinking?" **Crakow Shoes**

In the 15th century, European nobility embraced a footwear trend known as Crakow shoes, named after the city of Krakow. These shoes featured elongated, exaggeratedly pointed toes that extended several inches beyond the wearer's feet. The length of the toe could reach absurd proportions, with some shoes requiring additional support in the form of chains or strings. **Powdered Wigs**

The 17th and 18th centuries saw the rise of powdered wigs. Initially worn as a solution to hair loss caused by syphilis, lice infestations, or poor hygiene, powdered wigs became a symbol of wealth, status, and refinement. Wigs were meticulously styled, powdered, and adorned with ribbons, bows, and other embellishments. Despite their impracticality, powdered wigs remained fashionable for centuries, with the trend persisting in legal and ceremonial contexts to this day.

Hobble Skirts

Hobble skirts emerged as a controversial trend that restricted women's movement. These skirts were designed to fit tightly around the hips and thighs, then taper dramatically at the knees, making it difficult for wearers to walk. Some hobble skirts were so constricting that women had to take tiny, shuffling steps or use special devices known as hobble garters. **Ruffs**

Ruffs were elaborate neckwear worn by men and women in the Renaissance, characterized by their wide, fiilly collars that encircled the neck and framed the face. Made from starched linen or lace, ruffs were often extravagantly oversized, reaching several inches in width and requiring intricate folding and pleating techniques to achieve their



distinctive shape. While ruffs were initially worn as a symbol of wealth and status, they eventually became more elaborate and exaggerated. **Foot Binding**

Perhaps one of the most extreme fashion trends in history, foot binding was a practice that originated in China and persisted for over a thousand years. Young girls' feet were tightly bound with cloth strips, gradually compressing the bones and preventing normal growth, resulting in a deformed, "lotus-shaped" foot. Foot binding was considered a mark of beauty, femininity, and social status.

While these fashion trends may seem bizarre, they offer insights into the social, cultural, and aesthetic values of past societies. These peculiar fashion trends serve as reminders of the ever-evolving nature of style and expression.

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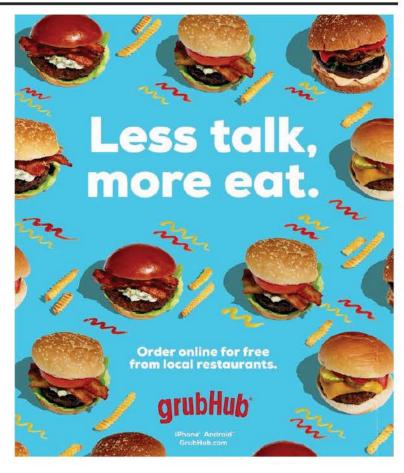
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