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Written by
KEITH GREEN

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info@yourlocalcoffeeneews.com

Everybody's Talking!

Blood alternative: Japan is testing a new kind of blood, created in labs, to meet medical needs without relying on constant donations. Aiming to solve supply issues faced by many hospitals worldwide, researchers are exploring synthetic versions that carry oxygen and don't require matching blood types. The project is especially urgent in places like Japan, where a declining population means fewer donors but rising demand. Unlike real blood, these alternatives can be stored longer and used more flexibly in emergencies and remote areas. If the trials succeed, the technology could ease pressure on blood banks and reshape how hospitals and other health officials prepare for surgeries, accidents, and public health crises.

Island wonder: Socotra, an Arabian Sea island off the coast of Yemen, is so unusual it has been likened to another planet. Rugged mountains and dry plateaus rise above stretches of beach and sand, creating a dramatic landscape surrounded by turquoise water. The island shelters many lifeforms found nowhere else on Earth, making it a showcase of rare biodiversity. Among its most recognizable plants are the umbrella-shaped dragon blood trees, with their striking red resin. The distinctive flora give the land a surreal appearance, adding to its mystique. With its unique species and remarkable scenery, Socotra stands out as one of the world's great natural wonders.

Grass legacy: Near the highlands of Huinchiri, Peru, a hand-woven bridge stretches over a river, rebuilt each year by dedicated villagers. The design, passed down through generations, follows ancient methods that use tightly braided grass in place of steel or wood. Victoriano Arizapana, the community's bridge master, oversees the process from start to finish, continuing a tradition rooted in Inca engineering. Before work begins, an offering is made to the land, seeking protection. Once completed, the old bridge is cut loose and left to return to nature below. With care, Arizapana secures the final ropes. The bridge then opens for use, ready for another season of crossings.

Book revival: A centuries-old church has been reimagined as a multi-level bookshop blending history with modern design in Zwolle, Netherlands. The building's tall arches and long central aisle remain untouched, while new structures have been added along the sides without altering the original frame. Visitors can browse the collection, pause under restored paintings, or listen to the organ during events. The space offers a mix of fiction, nonfiction, and children's books, and also features a cafe. Upstairs, a replica skeleton hints at the site's medieval past. The building now operates as a functional retail space with room for events and community use. Everything fits without disrupting the building's original layout.

Quoteable Quotes

"Love is a canvas furnished by Nature and embroidered by imagination."
—Voltaire

"Don't feel stupid if you don't like what everyone else pretends to love."
—Emma Watson

What's Happening

To submit something to the free community Whats Happening section, email us at info@yourlocalcoffeeneews.com a paragraph summary of your event at least three weeks prior to the event date:

HAALSA - Sat, Feb. 7 at 7:30pm by Zeinab Hosseinidoust, a scientist at McMaster whose team is creating new technologies to harness potentially 'good' antimicrobial viruses called phages that specifically target bacteria. As a possible alternative to antibiotics, it offers a new tool in healthcare. See <https://www.haalsa.org/current/lectures/3/index.html> for details and parking advice. Everyone welcome

Dundas Valley Historical Society hosts a talk by Mara Benjamin, Site Supervisor of Griffin House and Fieldcote Museum. Subject- Black History in Hamilton. Thursday February 12, 7pm, at Dundas Museum. Admission \$5, free to society members.

Ancaster Lions - looking for vendors for a large craft show on April 3 and 4 at the Ancaster fairgrounds. To book your space now or for info email lionsuehockridge@gmail.com

Knights of Columbus Council 14358 - Perogie, Sausage & Cabbage Dinner - St. Stanislaus Polish Church, 8 St. Ann St. Bartons Street East. One block east of Shreman. February 12th from 3 to 7 pm. Preorder at 905-979-6091, pick up after 12pm. \$15.00 per order. Entrance to the hall is from the parking lot

St. John's Pancake Dinner - Tues. February 17, 5-7 pm, Cost: \$15.00 - Adult, \$10 - Child (age 10 & under), \$45.00 - Family (parents & school age children), payable on the day at 272 Wilson St. E. Ancaster. Contact the office at 905-648-2353/admin@ancasteranglican.org to register. Walk-ins are welcome!

Trivia

1. What country is known as the "Land of a Thousand Lakes"?
2. The musical *West Side Story* is a retelling of this Shakespeare play.
3. This light show happens when solar particles collide with Earth's atmosphere.
4. A horse's height is measured in _____.
5. Who wrote the song "This Land Is Your Land"?

(Flip bottom of page for answers)

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(Over)

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Your Weekly Horoscope

ARIES

(March 20 - April 19)



Saturn is moving into Aries for the next two years. A likely challenge during this period will be finding a good balance of taking action vs. maintaining the status quo. Lucky numbers: 15, 16, 25, 26, 30, 47.

TAURUS

(April 20 - May 20)



You may have an opportunity to develop a bolder leadership style over the next two years. This might require you to integrate a higher level of risk into your world view. Lucky numbers: 8, 11, 13, 18, 21, 38.

GEMINI

(May 21 - June 20)



Your head and heart may be pulling you in different directions at the beginning of the week. If you can't reconcile this stalemate, consider waiting a few days to act. Lucky numbers: 3, 13, 30, 40, 45, 48.

CANCER

(June 21 - July 22)



Have you considered how to expand your role in the world to aid humanity? The weekend may be a good time to translate this adjustment into outward action. Lucky numbers: 2, 12, 13, 27, 28, 47.

LEO

(July 23 - Aug. 22)



At midweek, an opportunity to be of aid to a group, large or small, may emerge. It might require some sacrifice on your part, but still could be in your best interests. Lucky numbers: 9, 26, 27, 33, 37, 47.

VIRGO

(Aug. 23 - Sept. 22)



For the next few weeks, you may lose interest in performing work that requires precision and detail. Consider what this process might say about your passion. Lucky numbers: 4, 5, 11, 18, 20, 32.

LIBRA

(Sept. 23 - Oct. 22)



For the next few weeks, be aware of how much others are asking of you. Carefully consider whether you can meet their requests without sacrificing your own needs. Lucky numbers: 5, 13, 15, 22, 29, 46.

SCORPIO

(Oct. 23 - Nov. 21)



You may find the next two years to be a time of testing. The challenge might be to resist the temptation to be stubborn in favour of becoming a mature leader. Lucky numbers: 7, 8, 9, 13, 21, 22.

SAGITTARIUS

(Nov. 22 - Dec. 21)



Early this week, your natural sense of optimism may be strong. Before moving forward, be sure to check any plans you make during this period for potential obstacles. Lucky numbers: 6, 7, 8, 12, 15, 48.

CAPRICORN

(Dec. 22 - Jan. 19)



Your ambition to achieve success may be particularly strong during the middle of the week. Be sure to consider the goals of those who will be impacted by your efforts. Lucky numbers: 10, 17, 19, 36, 42, 44.

AQUARIUS

(Jan. 20 - Feb. 18)



As an Aquarius, your goals to aid humanity may get bogged down in confusion and uncertainty this week. Is this a message to be more flexible in your endeavours? Lucky numbers: 8, 14, 23, 31, 35, 42.

PISCES

(Feb. 19 - March 20)



Your focus may be on what you value and how to achieve it. If you are confused about how best to proceed, try to wait until you are more clear about what you desire. Lucky numbers: 1, 2, 5, 10, 28, 47.

Lucky numbers this week: This week's odds favour Leo winners with the luckiest number being 33.

Did You Know...

Star sand: On certain beaches in Japan, sand isn't made of tiny rocks but tiny star-shaped shells instead. These are remnants of microscopic sea creatures, leaving behind beaches dotted with natural and unusual patterns.

Desert glass: In the sands of Libya and Egypt, pale yellow glass pieces are thought to have been formed when intense heat from a meteor impact melted the desert surface. The result is a rare natural glass, admired for both its beauty and unusual origin.

Tower watch: Fire lookout towers began as wooden perches, later becoming sturdy steel cabins high above the trees. Once vital for spotting wildfires, they gradually were replaced by satellites and aircrafts. Many still stand as restored landmarks or retreats.

Pregnancy pause: Some mammals, including kangaroos, seals, and certain species of bears, can put their pregnancies on hold until conditions are more favourable for their offspring. This natural delay is one of nature's clever ways of protecting new life.

Silent surprise: Composer John Cage's piece 4'33" asks musicians to play nothing, turning audience sounds into the performance. Listeners soon realize true silence doesn't exist. Every shuffle, breath, or cough becomes part of the music.

On the Lighter Side

Some dogs are pointers. Mine's a nudger. He's too polite to point.

Restaurant hostess to chicken: "We don't serve poultry here." Chicken: "That's OK, I want a coffee."

Knock! Knock! Who's there? You. You who? Did you call me?

What do you call a story told by a giraffe? A tall tale.

Lots of people want to travel to the Netherlands to buy clogs. Wouldn't shoe?

Answers

Trivia answers: 1. Finland 2. Romeo and Juliet 3. Aurora 4. Hands 5. Woody Guthrie

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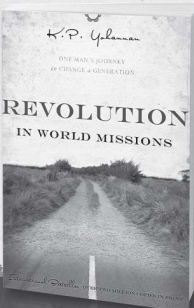
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- 1/2 tsp. - salt
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- 1/4 cup - butter, melted
- 1 cup - apple - peeled, cored, and chopped

RECIPE PREPARATION

- Preheat oven to 400 degrees F (200 degrees C).
- Lightly grease 12 muffin cups or line with paper muffin liners.
- Stir together flour, baking powder, sugar, cinnamon and salt. In a separate bowl, stir together milk, egg and butter. Stir egg mixture into flour mixture just until combined. Fold in chopped apples. Spoon batter into prepared muffin cups.
- Bake in preheated oven for 20 minutes, or until a toothpick inserted into center of a muffin comes out clean.

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