

Tuesday, 30 January 2024

## **An upside-down moon landing; a quagmire in Queensland; the 49ers furry friends and a yellow mystery solved.**

That's what's making news, kid's style...

### ***THE LOWDOWN***

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If you were enjoying a sleep-in and some time by the pool last week, you might have missed the big news story that Japan became the fifth nation ever to land a spacecraft on the moon.

Japan's moon lander aimed to make a pin-point landing on our lunar neighbour, but things didn't quite go to plan when it touched down upside down. This meant that the solar panels meant to power it weren't facing the sun, and so the craft quickly ran out of charge...we've all been there, right?

But it's not all doom and gloom. Before it was turned off, Japan's space agency, JAXA, was able to deploy the craft's payload...this is the equipment it was carrying...which included two Lunar Excursion Vehicles. One of these is about the size of a tennis ball, and partly designed by the people who make the Transformer toys, can change shape to move around the moon's surface, and it was able to take a photo of the craft to send back to Earth! I stuck a link to the photo in your episode notes.

So, while things didn't work out exactly as they'd hoped, the people at JAXA are picking themselves off, dusting that moon dust right off, and getting right back to work on their next mission.

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Speaking of dusting themselves off... the people of Queensland will be shaking the mud off themselves and will hopefully soon be able to start a clean-up, as the heavy rains and flooding, which arrived in the aftermath of Cyclone Kirrily, caused widespread damage and the closure of many Queensland schools yesterday.

Meanwhile, over in Western Australia, they're prepping for a heatwave later this week, with temperatures set to soar to 41 degrees.

Stay safe people; and take a listen to the Shortcut we released earlier this week all about Cyclones, Hurricanes and Typhoons if you want to learn more about this wild weather we're having lately.

## ***SPIN THE GLOBE***

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Each day, we give the world globe a spin, and find a news story from wherever it stops, and today, we've landed in San Francisco, California, where American football team, the San Francisco 49ers, are preparing for the Super Bowl, the biggest game of the year, against the Kansas City Chiefs next week. You've probably heard of the Chiefs, or at least one of their players, Travis Kelce, whose secret weapon this year seems to have been girlfriend, Taylor Swift.

But, did you know, the 49ers have a secret weapon too... and they're adorable! In the lead-up to their qualifying game, and in a bid to soothe some pre-game jitters, the team were visited by some special four-legged friends for a dose of puppy therapy, courtesy of an animal rescue organisation. For a dose of canine cuteness, there's a link to video in your episode notes

The 49ers have used this strategy successfully before to calm their nerves and help the players relax before a big game. And if they need any tips on chasing the ball, I'll bet the puppies can help with that to.

## ***ANIMAL KINGDOM***

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Speaking of puppies, remember Schnitzel von Krumm with a very low tum from the Hairy Maclary books? Now, imagine Schnitzel, in a paddock in the Australian outback, mustering a muddled mob of sheep. Sounds weird right?

Well, that's exactly what sausage dogs, just like Schnitzel, have been doing. I've pooped a link to video in the episode notes to prove it.

Did you know, that dachshunds, which is the proper name for this breed of dog, were originally bred to hunt badgers? And so, sheep mustering is something that comes naturally to them, but with the increase in popularity of show's like Muster Dogs and everyone's favourite working dog, Bluey, some breeders have noticed that the demand for these dogs as pets is skyrocketing.

Known for their energetic and curious nature, working dogs can be wonderful companions, but one dog club president wants people to remember that dachshunds can be stubborn and need to be around people, or they might become anxious and resort to destructive behaviours, like digging up your yard. So, do your research before pestering your parents for a dog kids! And remember, good things come in small packages.

## ***WEIRD SCIENCE***

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Scientists have known for a long time that poop is brown because of the colour of our digestive juices, old red blood cells, and all that lovely friendly gut bacteria it carries in it. There's a link to an explainer video in the episode notes. Yep! You're welcome teachers and parents.

But, up until recently, we didn't know how pee became yellow. And thanks to some clever scientists, now we do!

So, let me break it down for you. It's all about chemistry and it's caused by... yes, you guessed it, those good bacteria. Wow, those guys are really working hard for us!

Scientists have been able to identify one particular type of bacteria, out of the thousand or so types of bacteria that can live in our guts, that helps in the breakdown of old red blood cells. And it's one of the chemicals that's left over afterwards, called urobilin, that makes pee yellow.

Mystery solved!

## ***THE S'QUIZ***

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This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. What is the San Francisco 49ers secret weapon in the lead up to the Super Bowl?
2. What is the proper name for a sausage dog?
3. The break down of what type of cells in our bodies, releases the yellow chemical found in our pee?

## ***SHOUT OUTS***

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It's January 31 ... National Hot Chocolate Day in the United States, and I'm calling for it to be a national day here too, and I won't stop drinking hot chocolates til I've achieved my goal.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids celebrating a birthday today... Jett from Tamworth, Sophia from Ruse, Jayden from Forest Lake, Layla from Bussellton and Layla from Nedlands.

\*\*reminder to the Squiz Kids who celebrated a birthday in the summer holidays to check the Bumper Holiday Quiz Episodes for their birthday shout out. For those of you who missed that cut off we will announce as many belated shout outs as we can this week. Happy belated birthday to... Alex from Strathpine, Isla from Holland Park, Olyvia from Wellard, Mason from Graceville, Catherine from Hawthorn, Ellie from Kirkstall, Moksh (pronounced M-oh-ksh) from Plumpton, Clara from Bathurst, Mattia from Taylors Lakes, Fraser listening over in Singapore and Henry listening in Oxford, England.

Classroom shoutouts will commence next week.

**The S'Quiz Answers:**

1. Puppies
2. Dachshund
3. Red Blood Cells