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Coffeenewsberkshires@gmail.com Volume 3:42 November 25, 2024

## Everybody's Talking!

**Urban foxes:** A red fox cub found itself in the unfortunate position of having its head stuck in a garden sink drain in Basildon, England. After being trapped there for several hours, and with some gentle wiggling, the cub was successfully rescued by folks from the South Essex Wildlife Hospital. The cub was treated and released back into nature. Red foxes are common in the U.K. They are known for their intelligence and adaptability in urban environments, where they scavenge for food and find ample shelter. Scientists speculate that physical changes like longer snouts and smaller heads indicate a potential for domestication. No one knows how this fox got stuck in the first place.

**Mystery peaks:** In Anlong County, China, a series of pyramid-shaped mountains known as the Anlong Pyramids have captivated global interest. These natural formations, resembling Egypt's iconic pyramids, feature meticulously stacked rock layers, sparking conspiracy theories about ancient civilizations or alien activity. Despite these speculations, experts assert that these structures are natural formations, shaped by geological processes over millions of years. A professor at a local university has explained that mineral recrystallization and water erosion created the distinct, block-like appearance. Though science provides clear explanations, the allure of these mountains continues to fuel theories and draw curious tourists.

**Fiery chips:** In Tokyo, Japan, a group of high school students found themselves in the hospital after consuming ghost pepper-infused potato chips. The spicy snack, containing *bhut jolokia*, caused intense stomach and mouth pain, leading to an emergency call from their high school. The 14 affected students, part of a larger group who shared the chips, experienced symptoms severe enough to require medical attention. The chip manufacturer clearly labels these "18+ curry chips" as unsuitable for minors and those with health conditions due to their extreme heat. Despite the warnings, the students obtained the chips and suffered the consequences. After receiving treatment, they were released the same day.

**Smart ants:** The tiny *Polyrhachis femorata* species of ants are smart little critters. That's what scientists discovered while studying animal species on Kangaroo Island in Australia. The scientists found an ant colony and thought the tiny insects were all dead, until one moved slightly, that is. Feigning death is a natural defense mechanism used in dozens of animal species. But for the surprised scientists, finding an entire ant colony pretending to be dead was new. The ants had contorted their bodies into unnatural positions and had stayed absolutely still, which tricked the scientists. This remarkable display of collective mimicry highlights the sophisticated survival strategies of the ants.

## Quoteable Quotes

"In prosperity our friends know us; in adversity we know our friends."  
—John Churton Collins

"The greater the obstacle, the more glory in overcoming it."  
—Molière

## What's Happening

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## Trivia

1. The prime meridian is located at 0 degrees longitude—T/F?
  2. The city of Gdansk is in what country?
  3. Who composed the music for *An American in Paris*?
  4. What animal's milk becomes Roquefort cheese?
  5. Riboflavin is better known as vitamin B2, C, or A?
- (Flip bottom of page for answers)

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