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Remains of houses and cars destroyed by one of the wildfires in Australia

WILDFIRES STRIKE SOUTHEASTERN AUSTRALIA

For ten years large areas of Australia have been suffering from a severe drought. This has made many of the country's forests – known as the “bush” – very dry and dangerous.

The south-eastern region of Australia, especially around the city of Melbourne in the state of Victoria, has been experiencing a heat wave. This has lasted for over three weeks. Daily temperatures have regularly reached 104°F (40°C). The high temperatures have been blamed for the deaths of at least 30 people, most of whom were over 70 years old.

This heat wave is thought to be the hottest for nearly 100 years. On February 8, the temperature in Melbourne reached a record-breaking 117°F (47°C). Several bushfires in the surrounding areas broke out. Strong winds and the dry forests caused the fires to spread very quickly.

In Australia bushfires happen every year. There are more wildfires in the south-eastern part of Australia than anywhere else in the world. Usually the fires can be controlled by teams of firefighters. People whose houses are threatened by bushfires often stay and use water hoses to protect their homes. However, the bushfires that broke out on February 8, were different.

The fires raced through the forest at unbelievable speeds. Burning **embers** were blown into the air by the strong winds. These helped spread the fires to other areas of the bush. Some people described the flames as being as high as a 40-story building. One fire was over 60 miles (96 kilometers) wide.

Once people realized the danger, they decided to abandon their homes. Some did not have time to collect anything from their houses before getting in their cars

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and driving away. Others were too late and were killed by the flames. Some roads were blocked by walls of flames that then **engulfed** the cars and the people in them.

Many of those who escaped the bushfires made their way towards Melbourne. Government officials set up relief shelters where people who had lost their homes could stay. Many local people offered to look after those affected by the bushfires. Some hospitals ran short of supplies as they had to treat many people for burns.

On February 9, Kevin Rudd, the prime minister of Australia, ordered the country's parliament to be closed down. This was as an act of **condolence** for the relatives of people killed by the wildfires. The prime minister described the fires as "hell in all its fury". He said these had been the worst bushfires in Australia's history.



By February 10, the temperatures had cooled and the firefighters had begun to get the fires under control. Many expect some fires will continue to burn for weeks.

Government officials say over 180 people had been killed and many others are still missing. Over 500 have been treated for burns. Nearly 1,000 homes were burned to the ground. The towns of Kinglake and Marysville were almost totally destroyed. It is estimated around 1,200 square miles (3,110 square

kilometers) of forest and farmland have been affected by the fires.

Most of the fires were caused by lightning but the police believe at least two were started on purpose by people. Starting fires deliberately like this is called arson. The police have set up a 100-person team to investigate some of the fires. Senior police officers are confident they will catch and arrest anyone who deliberately started them.

Many Australians are horrified to think some of the bushfires could have been started on purpose. Yet the police say of the thousands of wildfires that happen in the country each year, at least half are started by arsonists. In Australia there are strict laws against lighting fires deliberately. People found guilty of arson can be sent to prison for 15 years. If anyone is killed by the fire, this can increase to 25 years.

Forestry officials use a method called controlled burning to reduce the risk of bushfires. Controlled burning gets rid of a lot of dry vegetation and undergrowth. This means if a bushfire breaks out there is less fuel to keep it going. Controlled burning has been used in Australia for hundreds of years as a way of managing the land. Many say the bushfires in the state of Victoria show controlled burning should be used more to prevent such devastating fires.

While Victoria was suffering from the heat wave and bushfires much of the north-eastern state of Queensland was flooded. The flooding was caused by a strong cyclone – a tropical storm. It brought weeks of heavy rain. Over 3,000 homes were damaged. Some people said they had even seen crocodiles in flooded towns. Officials say the floods must have washed the crocodiles out of the rivers. ■

VOLCANO ERUPTS IN JAPAN

On February 2, a volcano in Japan erupted for the first time since 2004. Mount Asama is one of the most active volcanoes on the country's main island of Honshu.

The 8,430 feet (2,568 meter) high volcano sent rocks flying through the air. Some landed as far as 0.6 miles (one kilometer) away. White smoke from the volcano's crater rose one mile (1.6 kilometers) into the sky.

Nearby towns and villages were covered in a layer of ash. Some of the ash even reached Tokyo, the capital of Japan, 90 miles (144 kilometers) away. However, no lava was reported to be running down the side of the mountain.



Mount Asama

None of the 45,000 people who live around the bottom of the snow-covered volcano was injured. Scientists had warned a day before that the volcano was about to erupt. They say it is possible there may soon be an even larger eruption. People living close to the volcano have been told to be prepared to leave their homes quickly if the alarm is sounded.

Japan has over 100 active volcanoes. This is about 10% of the world's total. The country sits on what geologists call the "Ring of Fire". This horseshoe-shaped line runs around the edge of the Pacific

Ocean. Along it, huge, slow moving sections of the Earth's crust meet and bump into each other. Earthquakes and volcanoes often happen close to where these slow-shifting plates meet.

Four different tectonic plates meet near to Japan. This is the reason why it has frequent earthquakes and so many active volcanoes.

The last major eruption of Mount Asama, was in 2004. Then the amount of ash thrown out by the volcano caused damage to crops growing in nearby fields. One of the volcano's biggest eruptions happened in 1783. Around 1,500 people were killed. Enough ash was thrown into the atmosphere by the eruption to affect the weather. This caused farmers' crops to fail for several years afterwards, and led to a famine in some parts of Japan.

Recently there has been other volcanic activity in the region. There was a small eruption of a volcano in a different part of Japan, as well as a volcanic eruption in a nearby part of Russia called the Kamchatka peninsular. ■

VIOLENCE BREAKS OUT IN MADAGASCAR

Rioting has broken out in Antananarivo, the capital city of Madagascar. There are several reasons for the riots. However, many people believe they are the result of the rivalry between the president of the country and the mayor of the capital city.

Marc Ravalomanana is Madagascar's president. He became president in 2002, and was re-elected in 2006. The president is also the owner of one of the country's largest food companies. Before he became

president Mr. Ravalomanana was the elected mayor of the capital city.

The current mayor of Antananarivo is Andry Rajoelina. He was elected in 2007. Mr. Rajoelina, who is 34 years old, is a popular mayor. He is a former disc jockey (DJ) and a successful businessman. Mr. Rajoelina also used to run a television station. Last year the government forced his television station to close after it broadcast an interview with a former politician.

Many people who live in Madagascar are very poor. The riots started when protesters demonstrated about the rising cost of food. After a week of violence in which over 100 people died, Mayor Rajoelina suddenly announced he was now in charge of the country. The mayor accused the president of ruining the country and acting like a dictator.



Marc Ravalomanana president of Madagascar

In October the government announced it had signed an agreement with a part of Daewoo – a large company based in South Korea. The agreement was to give Daewoo a huge area of land in Madagascar to grow corn and other crops. Some of the crops would be sent back to South Korea. In return, Daewoo would create large numbers of jobs for local people. Many people living in Madagascar have been unhappy about this agreement.

The mayor demanded the president step down by February 7. Yet on February 3, the government an-

NewsCAST

EXPENSIVE DRIVING TEST — A woman in South Korea has been taking the first part of her driving test almost every day since 2005 – and has failed every time. In South Korea drivers must pass a written test before being allowed to drive. The test is marked out of 100. People have to get over 60 marks to pass. Officials say the woman's results are usually between 30 and 50 marks. So far the woman has taken the test nearly 800 times. Each one costs ₩6,000 (\$4.20), so she has spent around ₩4.5 million (\$2,800) on driving tests. The woman said she will keep trying until she passes.

nounced Mr. Rajoelina had been fired from his position as mayor. A group of government officials has been appointed in his place. More rioting followed.

A senior court in the country insisted the president can not be forced to stand down unless a vote is taken in the country's two houses of parliament. This is unlikely to happen.

Supporters of Mr. Rajoelina have continued to hold demonstrations. On February 6, 28 of his supporters were shot dead by the police. Mr. Rajoelina says he plans to set up a rival government. He has encouraged workers to go on strike as a protest against the president.

Recently foreign companies have begun to invest money in Madagascar. The number of tourists visiting the country has increased. Many people think the recent violence will damage the country's reputation. This means tourists might stop visiting and the foreign companies may decide to leave. ■

PAINTINGS RE-UNITED

Art experts from two different countries have solved a very unusual jigsaw.

Paolo Veronese (1528 – 1588) was an Italian Renaissance painter. Around 1563, two wealthy cousins asked him to create a large painting. The cousins wanted the painting to decorate the altar of a small chapel that belonged to their family. Members of the family were buried in the chapel, which was attached to a larger church. The painting – known as an altarpiece – was more than 16.5 feet (five meters) high.

In 1788, the church was forced to close down. A document from 1795, written by an art historian, says Veronese's altarpiece was cut up into bits and sold as separate paintings. That year, one bit of the altarpiece was recorded as part of an art collection that was kept in Britain. A few years later another two pieces were added to a different art collection in London.

It was not until 1862 that someone realized the three separate paintings looked as if they had belonged to the same picture. These three pieces were thought to be all that remained of the large altarpiece. Today they are displayed in three different museums, one in Scotland, one in England and the other in Canada.

When one of the paintings was cleaned it was obvious that a hand and part of a cloak on the edge of the picture had been painted over. (This painting is the one that came from the bottom right-hand corner of the altarpiece.) This must have been done to make it easier to sell – so it didn't look as if a figure was missing from the

picture. The hand and the cloak showed there had been a figure in the center of the altarpiece, but art historians thought it must have disappeared soon after the painting was cut up.

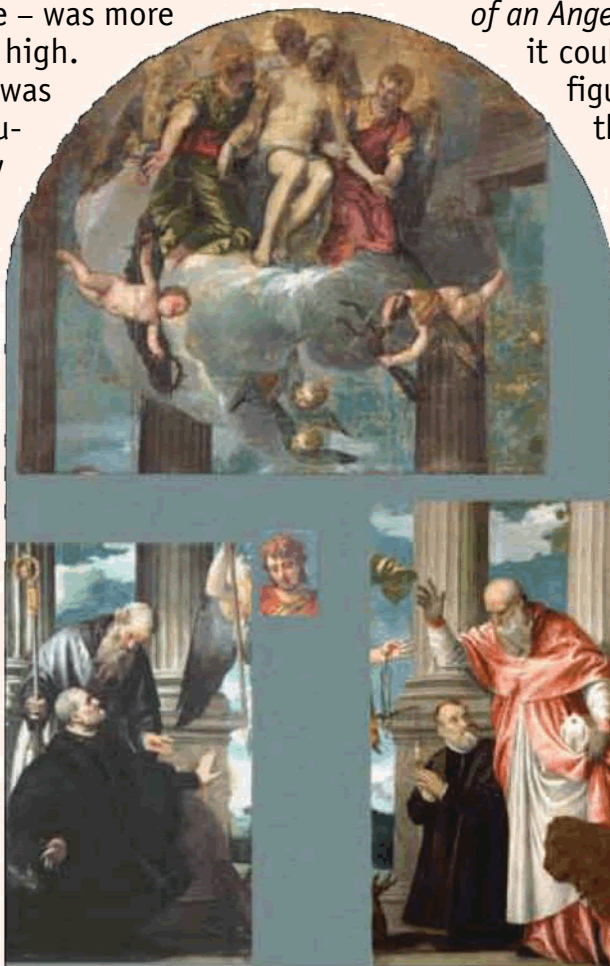
Now, Dr. Xavier Salomon, an art expert from Britain, has tracked down a fourth piece of the painting. He discovered it in an art museum in Texas, in the U.S..

There, Dr. Salomon saw a painting called *Head of an Angel* by Veronese. He wondered if it could be the head of the missing figure. If it were, it would mean those who cut the painting up had decided they did not want the figure's body. Instead they turned the head into a small "portrait" picture. Dr. Salomon used photographs of the other three paintings and the portrait to try to match them. He soon realised the painting of the head fitted the others like a jigsaw piece.

The *Head of an Angel* painting was sent to Canada for special tests. These investigated the type of paint used for the picture, how old it was, and the style of the painting. These tests proved the *Head of an Angel* was part of the original altarpiece.

All four pieces have now been re-united at a special art exhibition in London that opened on February 10. This is the first time all four parts of the original painting have been seen together since the altarpiece was cut up over two hundred years ago.

After being shown in London the four paintings will also be **exhibited** together in both Canada and the U.S..



The four paintings of Paolo Veronese's altarpiece positioned in their correct places

GROUNDHOG DAY

On February 2, many people living in North America were asking one question – did the groundhog see its shadow?

Groundhog Day is a custom that began in North America in the American state of Pennsylvania. It's believed that the tradition of Groundhog Day first came from Germany. Over 100 years ago many people emigrated from Germany to Pennsylvania so the custom was probably brought with them.

The groundhog is a large **rodent** that lives in North America. It grows up to 24 inches (60 centimeters) long and weighs around 6.6 pounds (three kilograms). Groundhogs live underground. They have strong front legs with thick claws, which are well-suited to digging their burrows. Groundhogs mostly live on vegetation and berries. Yet they will also eat insects, grubs and snails.



Groundhog

The custom of Groundhog Day says if a groundhog sees its own shadow when it comes out of its burrow on the morning of February 2, and then goes back into its burrow, there will be six more weeks of winter. If the groundhog doesn't see its shadow, and leaves its burrow, spring will arrive early. This is because cloudy weather in springtime in North America is warmer than bright sunny weather.

The two most famous groundhogs are Punxsutawney Phil, who lives in Pennsylvania, and Shubenacadie Sam, who lives in the Canadian province of Nova Scotia. Shubenacadie Sam is always the first groundhog to predict the weather on February 2, because of Nova Scotia's time zone.

Punxsutawney hosts the largest Groundhog Day celebration. The event has been held there since 1887. On February 2, around 13,000 people gathered in Punxsutawney to see Phil come out of his burrow at 8.00 a.m.

Both Sam and Phil made the same prediction. Groundhog Day officials in the two towns said the groundhogs had both seen their shadows so there will be six more weeks of winter. Meteorologists in Canada agreed with the groundhogs' prediction, saying there would be more snow and freezing rain in the week following Groundhog Day.

Groundhog Day is halfway between the northern hemisphere's winter **solstice**, the shortest day of the year, and the spring equinox, the date on which the day and night are exactly equal in length. ■

HOW DID ICEMAN DIE?

Oetzi is the nickname given to a Stone Age man whose body was found, almost perfectly preserved in ice, in 1991. Scientists believe the iceman lived about 5,200 years ago. His body was discovered high up in the Alps mountain range. The scientists who first examined Oetzi wondered how and why he died, and where was he traveling to. Now scientists from Germany and Italy have used new technology to work out what happened to him.

Soon after Oetzi was found it was discovered that he had an arrowhead made of flint in his shoulder. Later a deep wound was noticed on one of his hands. These injuries were not thought to have caused his death. Most experts believed he survived these wounds but died of the cold high in the mountains.



Oetzi, where he was first discovered

The team of scientists used a way of studying the chemicals in human cells to work out in what order Oetzi's injuries happened. They could also tell for how long he had been wounded before his death.

The wound to his hand happened a few days before he died. Later he was hit by a small blunt object – the scientists think this could have been a **slingshot** stone. Almost immediately afterwards he was struck by the arrow and then hit by a large rock or club. This final blow killed Oetzi.

The scientists believe the iceman's injuries tell a story. First he was in a fight during which his hand was injured. (The scientists admit this injury could have been caused by an accident with a flint knife.) A few days later Oetzi was chased into the mountains where he was finally caught and killed.

Oetzi was carrying his own arrows, but they were blunt. This shows he must have left where he lived in a hurry. Arrows were an important weapon used for hunting. If Oetzi had been leaving on a

hunting trip, he would have taken the time to prepare his arrows by sharpening them.

Oetzi was found in 1991, by two people out walking in the mountains, who noticed his body in a patch of melting ice and snow. They called the local police, who decided to open a murder investigation. As the body was so well-preserved, the police thought it was someone who had died recently. When they noticed his clothes and the tools he was carrying they called a team of archaeologists to investigate.

The iceman was found in the Italian Alps very close to the border with Switzerland. He was nicknamed Oetzi because he was found at the top of the Otz Valley. Scientists estimate he was 46 years old when he died. ■

ISRAEL'S NEXT PRIME MINISTER

On February 10, elections were held in Israel to choose who will become the country's next prime minister.



Benjamin Netanyahu

Tzipi Livni

Israel has a president and a prime minister. The president is head of state but has few powers. The prime minister runs the country and is usually the leader of the political party that has the most seats in the Knesset – the Israeli parliament.

Ehud Olmert has been prime minister of Israel since 2006. He was also the leader of the Kadima

NewsCAST

PET DOG FOUND — A lost dog has finally arrived home. Its owners, from the U.S., were on a summer holiday in a different part of the country. While they were out walking, a train whistle blew and scared the dog. It ran away. The couple spent days searching for the dog and put up posters asking for help. This was unsuccessful and the owners returned home. Then on January 25 – six months after the dog went missing – a farmer telephoned them. He had found their dog living in an old building on his farm. It has survived six months outdoors alone in winter temperatures as low as -27°F (-32°C).

Party. Last year he was accused of dishonesty. Some people claim he illegally kept some money given to his political party when he was mayor of Jerusalem. Mr. Olmert insists he has done nothing wrong, but he will have to appear before a court. When he found out he would have to go to court, he decided to resign as both prime minister and the leader of the Kadima Party.

The Kadima Party is now led by Tzipi Livni. In the election Kadima won 28 seats in the 120-seat Knesset. This was more than any of the other three main political parties. The Likud Party came second with 27 seats. Likud is led by Benjamin Netanyahu, a former prime minister of Israel.

For a government to get laws passed, more than half the members of parliament have to vote for them. In Israeli elections it is very unusual for one party to win over half the seats in the Knesset. Therefore, one of the two leading parties has to get the support of other smaller parties

to ensure it can get at least 60 votes. When parties support each other in this way it is called a coalition.

Shimon Peres is the president of Israel. Now that the election is over, he is expected to ask Ms. Livni to form a coalition government, because her party won the most seats. If Ms. Livni can persuade the third-placed party to support her, she will become prime minister.

However, President Peres does not have to choose the party that has won the most number of seats. He can choose any party leader he believes has the best chance of forming a coalition government. This means he might decide to ask Mr. Netanyahu to try to arrange a coalition with the third-placed party.

The person President Peres chooses will have 42 days to form a coalition. If the person he chooses fails, the other will be given a chance.

It could therefore be weeks before either Ms. Livni or Mr. Netanyahu becomes prime minister. President Peres has asked Mr. Olmert to stay on as a caretaker prime minister until the new prime minister has been confirmed. ■

BRITAIN HIT BY SNOW STORMS

For ten days at the end of January, and the beginning of February snowstorms caused problems in large parts of Britain. Many say the snowfalls were the worst to have happened in the country for over 20 years.

On the night of February 2, six inches (15 centimeters) of snow fell on London, the capital city. The next day thousands of people were unable to go to work as overground and underground trains stopped run-

ning. Schools were closed. All the city's buses were canceled.

Many people complained. They said London buses had never stopped running before – even during the bad winter of 1963, and during the bombing in the Second World War. Transport officials explained that as the snow fell on a Sunday night most buses were parked in their depots. The depots became covered in snow and it was not possible to get the buses out onto the roads. The snowfall was so heavy all airports in the south of the country were also forced to close.

Forecasters predicted the blizzards a few days before they arrived. Yet it was difficult for them to work out which parts of Britain would be worst hit. Over the ten days, heavy snow fell over most of the country. Hundreds of schools and businesses were forced to shut. Many people were surprised by how suddenly the snow fell. Several roads quickly became impassable and people were trapped in their cars.



Britain's Houses of Parliament in the snow

In the southwest of the country over 200 people had to be rescued. Their cars were stuck on a main road after a sudden snowfall. Police even asked a local mountain rescue team to help them find all the people trapped.

To make travel safe in snowy, icy conditions, trucks spread a type of salt on the roads. The salt comes from underground mines. Road salt

lowers the freezing point of water so it melts the ice.

This year's winter has been unusually cold in Britain. The many days of snow meant local councils started to run out of road salt. A number said they only had enough for the main roads. This meant all other roads soon became blocked with snow. Extra supplies of road salt were ordered from Spain.

Many people criticized local government officials, saying they were not properly prepared for the bad weather. A government minister explained Britain only spends a small amount of money on snow-clearing equipment. This is because, unlike other countries such as Canada and Russia, Britain rarely has heavy snow. ■

U.S. TOLD TO LEAVE CENTRAL ASIAN AIRBASE

The president of Kyrgyzstan announced on February 4, that American troops and planes must leave his country.

Kyrgyzstan is in central Asia. It was formerly part of the Russian-led Soviet Union. When the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, Kyrgyzstan became an independent country.

The U.S. invaded the nearby country of Afghanistan in 2001. The government of the U.S. asked if American forces could use an old Russian airbase in Kyrgyzstan. It's thought the Kyrgyz government agreed to the request in return for an annual payment of about \$60 million.

Kurmanbek Bakiyev is Kyrgyzstan's president. On February 4, President Bakiyev said he had told the American government that its air force would no longer be

allowed to use the airbase. He added that all US forces would now have to leave Kyrgyzstan.

The base, called Manas airbase, is close to Bishkek – the capital of Kyrgyzstan. Some experts believe the Kyrgyz government's decision to stop the U.S. from using Manas airbase could have an effect on the war in Afghanistan.



The U.S. decided to invade Afghanistan after America was attacked by al-Qaeda – an extremist militant group – in 2001. Al-Qaeda's leaders were based in Afghanistan at the time. The U.S. told the Taliban, which governed Afghanistan, to hand over senior members of al-Qaeda. When it refused, the U.S. led an invasion of the country.

Although the Taliban was quickly defeated, its members withdrew to the mountainous areas along the border with Pakistan. From their mountain hideouts, Taliban fighters have continued to attack American troops and the many NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) soldiers in Afghanistan.

Supplies of food, weapons and other equipment are needed by the American and NATO troops. Many of these are taken into Afghanistan by large American military planes, which fly from Manas airbase in Kyrgyzstan. American fighter planes also use the airbase.

Experts say, because of the closure of the airbase, many of the

military supplies will now have to be taken in by road from Pakistan. The only road that can be used from Pakistan runs through the Khyber Pass. Recently, trucks carrying supplies along this road have been attacked by Taliban fighters.

Last month, a senior American general visited Bishkek. Some people think he offered to increase the annual payment to \$130 million. Yet the Kyrgyz government still refused.

The president of Kyrgyzstan has also recently announced his country has accepted \$2 billion of aid from Russia. He claims the Russian offer had nothing to do with his decision to shut the Manas airbase to the Americans. Yet many people do not believe this. They think the Russian leaders would not give Kyrgyzstan any aid unless the base was closed. Russia, they suspect, was unhappy that American forces were in this part of central Asia, which was formerly part of the old Russian-led Soviet Union. ■

EARTH'S OLDEST ANIMALS?

Some of the earliest signs of animal life on Earth can be found in Australia. These are fossils of creatures that had small soft bodies and lived in the sea. Scientists have calculated these fossils are about 580 million years old.

Now, a team of scientists working in Oman have found traces of animals in much older rocks. The animals are a type of sea sponge. The rocks in which signs of the sponges were found are 635 million years old. This means the sea sponges were alive around 55 million years before the ancient animals whose fossils can be found in Australia.

The scientists did not find fossils of the sponges themselves, but the remains of a certain type of chemical. Sponges leave behind a chemical when they die. This chemical was discovered in the rocks. The amount of the chemical found in the rocks shows there must have been many sponges living on the sea bed 635 million years ago.



Rocks in which traces of the sponges were found

If sponges were alive at that time it would prove there was oxygen in the oceans. If there had been no oxygen in the water, the sponges would not have been able to survive. Yet the small size of the sponges may mean the amount of oxygen in the sea was much lower than it is today.

Some people were surprised by the discovery. It's thought that the Earth was completely covered in ice 635 million years ago. This period in the Earth's history is known as the Marinoan glaciation. It has been nicknamed "Snowball Earth".

Some scientists believe during the Snowball Earth period, it was not just the land that was covered in thick ice. All the oceans were iced over, too. Some believe the sea ice was as thick as 1.25 miles (two kilometers) at the equator.

Other scientists are not sure. It's possible the discovery that sponges were living during this period may prove not all the oceans were completely covered in ice. The only place animals would have been able

to live under the thick ice would have been close to hot volcanic springs on the ocean floor. However, the scientists who discovered the ancient sponges say they would not have been able to live near these types of hot springs. ■

WOMAN SWIMS ACROSS ATLANTIC OCEAN?

In January, a 56-year-old American mother set out to swim across the Atlantic Ocean. She started from the Cape Verde Islands, off the west coast of Africa. On February 5, 24 days after she started, Jennifer Figge arrived in Trinidad and claimed to be the first woman to have swum across the Atlantic.

Ms. Figge was accompanied by a boat. The crew included a doctor. Ms. Figge swam for anything from 20 minutes to eight hours a day depending on how rough the sea was. On some occasions the waves were as high as 30 feet (nine meters).

To protect her against shark attacks Ms. Figge swam inside a large metal cage, which was pulled along by the boat. She did not see any sharks. Yet pilot whales, turtles, dolphins and large jellyfish all swam close to her.



Jennifer Figge

When not swimming, Ms. Figge rested and slept on the boat. To build up the energy she needed Ms. Figge ate pasta, baked potatoes, meat, fish

and peanut butter. When she was swimming, crew members would throw special energy drinks to her. She drank these while she swam along. If the sea was too rough one of the crew would dive into the water, swim into the cage, and give the energy drinks to her.

Ms. Figge said she first got the idea to swim across the Atlantic Ocean when she flew over it in a plane when she was 11 years old. Then she was traveling from the U.S. to Italy with her mother for a holiday.

During her swim, she wore a red cap and a “lucky” red T-shirt under her wetsuit. She also kept a picture of Gertrude Ederle on the boat. Ms. Ederle, who was also an American, was the first woman to swim across the English Channel in 1926. Ms. Ederle also wore a red swimming cap.



Jennifer Figge's route across the Atlantic Ocean

Ms. Figge's idea was to swim a total of 2,100 miles (3,380 kilometers) but she was blown a long way off course. She had planned to arrive in the Bahamas, not Trinidad. After arriving on Trinidad, Ms. Figge announced she would swim on to the British Virgin Islands. She left on February 8, and hopes to arrive before the end of the month.

Some people have been surprised by Ms. Figge's claim to have swum across the Atlantic in such a short time. They say, even with strong ocean currents helping her it would

not be possible to swim this distance in 24 days. Her fellow crew members said they would not confirm the exact distance she swam until she arrives in the British Virgin Islands.

Benoît Lecomte, a French long-distance swimmer, was the first person to swim across the Atlantic in 1998. He swam from the coast of the U.S. to the coast of France – a distance of about 3,700 miles (5,900 kilometers). It took him 72 days. Mr. Lecomte also had a boat on which he could rest, eat and sleep, and a supporting crew. ■

260-YEAR OLD BRITISH WARSHIP FOUND

The British Navy has had six ships named HMS Victory. (HMS stands for either His or Her Majesty's Ship – depending on whether a King or Queen is the ruling monarch.) The most famous HMS Victory is the ship from which Admiral Lord Nelson commanded the British fleet at the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805.

An earlier HMS Victory was launched in 1737. At the time the ship was one of the largest and best-equipped in the British Navy. In 1744 the Victory was returning to England when it was hit by a storm in the English Channel. The ship was carrying four tons of Portuguese gold and was armed with over 40 bronze cannons.

During the storm, other navy ships traveling back to England lost sight of the Victory. After the storm passed there was no sign of the large ship. A search was carried out, but all that was found was some wooden wreckage washed up on the Channel Islands. HMS Victory and the crew of 1,150 men had disappeared. For

NewsCAST

FAILED BIRD SMUGGLER — A man has been caught smuggling by Australian customs officials. He was searched after he arrived on a flight from the United Arab Emirates. Australia has strict rules about bringing in plants and animals from other countries. Officials found the man had seeds and eggs in his bags. Surprisingly, he was also found to have two live pigeons, wrapped in padded envelopes, in his trousers. Officials said the pigeons were not hurt. Australia's strict customs rules are meant to protect people's health and the country's ecosystems.



The man could be sent to jail for up to ten years.

265 years, what happened to HMS Victory has been a mystery.

On February 2, an American company called Odyssey Marine Exploration claimed it had found the ship. The company's boss said the wreck was discovered last year, but it has taken a long time to prove it was the Victory. One reason the company is now sure it has found the Victory is that its divers pulled up several bronze cannons from the seabed.

The Odyssey company makes money from looking for sunken ships and then selling any treasure it finds. Yet searching for sunken wrecks and bringing items to the surface can be very expensive. It's therefore unusual for the company to make large amounts of money.

Some experts worry that companies such as Odyssey damage ancient wrecks that are full of important artifacts. Yet Odyssey insists

it records everything it finds properly. Odyssey uses very expensive equipment to search for shipwrecks, which museums and governments might not be able to afford. Some people say if private companies such as Odyssey did not look for shipwrecks, many of them would never be discovered.



Painting of the sinking of HMS Victory

Odyssey must also obey international laws about shipwrecks. The Victory was a British Navy ship, so the wreck belongs to the British government. Some people believe Odyssey has already made an arrangement with the British government to share any money made from the wreck. If the gold the Victory was carrying were to be found, experts say it could be worth over \$980 million. ■

IRAN LAUNCHES SATELLITE

The first satellite designed and built in Iran has been successfully launched. The satellite – called Omid, which means “Hope” – was sent into space on February 3, on top of an Iranian-designed and -built rocket.

In the past, Iran has not been able to launch its own satellites. This is

because it did not have the expertise to build the type of rockets needed for satellite launches. Iran’s first satellite was sent into space in 2005 on a Russian-built rocket.

Iranian officials said their satellite will be used for communications and scientific research. The successful launch has worried some other countries such as the U.S., Israel, and some member countries of the European Union (EU).

These countries have accused Iran of making nuclear weapons. Iran admits it has been carrying out nuclear experiments. Yet it insists it only wants to make electricity from nuclear energy and has no plans to develop nuclear weapons.

However, Iranian officials have continued to refuse to let specially-trained inspectors from the United Nations (U.N.) visit the places where it is working on nuclear technology. This makes other countries suspicious. If the U.N. inspectors were allowed to visit, they would be able to find out if Iran’s experiments were really designed for making electricity or weapons.

Some people also claim it’s strange for Iran to want to make electricity from nuclear power as it is one of the biggest oil-producing countries in the world. It would be much less expensive, they say, for Iran to make more electricity by burning oil.

The U.S., Israel and some EU member countries have also accused Iran of developing rockets that can be used to fire nuclear weapons over long distances. For two years this has caused arguments between the U.S. and Russia.

The U.S. has received permission from Poland and the Czech Republic to put a missile shield system in those countries. This system

is designed to detect any rockets, or missiles, fired at the U.S. or Europe from a Middle Eastern country, such as Iran. The shield system would launch its own missiles to intercept, or shoot down, any rockets fired from the Middle East.



Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, president of Iran

Russia does not want the U.S. to place its missile shield near Russia’s border. It believes no Middle Eastern country is planning to build rockets that could travel that far. It thinks the U.S. just wants to have missiles close to Russia.

The U.S. claims the Iranian satellite launch proved Iran is now able to build long-distance rockets. The U.S. suspects these rockets could also be used to fire nuclear weapons.

The president of Iran, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, said the rockets and satellites were built for scientific purposes. Iran, he said, has no plans to attack any other country. Mr. Ahmadinejad insists, like many other countries in the world, Iran should be allowed to develop its own scientific technology. ■

GIANT SNAKE FOSSIL DISCOVERED

Palaeontologists – scientists who study the history of life on Earth – have discovered a giant snake fossil. They believe the reptile could have been the world’s largest snake ever.

The scientists say the giant snake lived between 58 and 60 million years ago. The fossil was discovered in a coal mine in Colombia, in South America. The fossil shows the snake was about 42.5 feet (13 meters) long. The scientists estimate it could have grown even longer. They calculate it must have weighed about one tonne – the same weight as a small car. Today the world's largest snakes can grow up to 29.5 feet (nine meters) long.

Paleontologists have named the newly-discovered snake "Titanoboa". A boa is a type of snake. The word "Titan" is used to describe things that are very big (for example, the giant ship Titanic). In Greek mythology the Titans were very powerful gods.

Reptiles are cold-blooded. This means their body heat depends on the temperature of the part of the world in which they live. For large

snakes to be able to move, grow, and digest food, they need to live in a warm climate. Scientists know that today larger snakes cannot survive in cold climates.



Artist's impression of Titanoboa

The large size of the snake fossil provides clues about the environment and climate in which the giant snake lived. Scientists say for such a huge cold-blooded reptile to survive, and grow, the Earth's temperature 60 million years ago must have been warmer than it is today. They think the large snake could even have died out

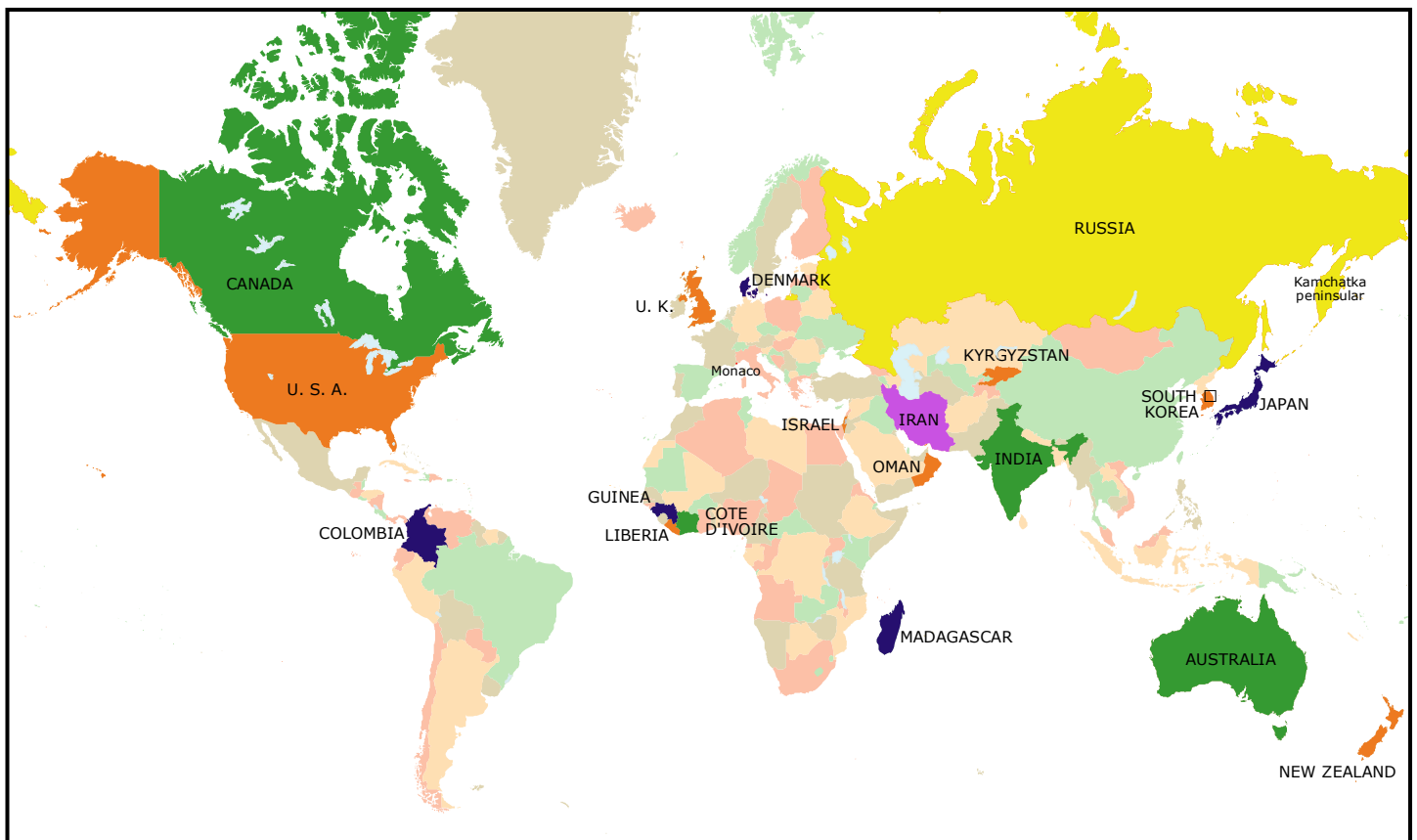
because the Earth's temperature became cooler.

The paleontologists believe the ancient species shared some similarities with modern anacondas. These snakes are found in South America. The anaconda is one of the world's largest snake species and mostly lives in water. Anacondas do not have a poisonous bite, but kill their prey by wrapping themselves around it and crushing it to death.

Fossils of large turtles and crocodiles were found in the same areas as the snake fossil. Paleontologists think "Titanoboa" may have fed on the crocodiles. ■

WAITANGI DAY

New Zealand's national day – called Waitangi Day – is celebrated on



This map shows countries to which news stories refer in this issue. Visit www.newsademic.com for more detailed world maps.

February 6, every year. On this day in 1840 Maori leaders and officials from Britain signed an agreement known as the Treaty of Waitangi.

Before the treaty was signed many people had traveled to New Zealand from Britain and other European countries. Some of them took lands away from the Maori people who already lived there. The Treaty officially made New Zealand part of the British Empire. In return the British government said it would protect the Maori people's rights to their land in New Zealand.



Painting of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi

There have always been discussions about what the Treaty really says and if the British kept their side of the agreement. The English language version of the Treaty is slightly different from the Maori version, which has led to arguments. Yet many people consider the signing of the Treaty as the founding of modern New Zealand.

It is not unusual for there to be protests on Waitangi Day. The people who protest think the Treaty was unfair. They also say it was not honored by the British after it was signed. Some believe it just meant the British could take over Maori lands more easily.

In 2000, Helen Clark, the prime minister at the time, did not go to Waitangi for the day's celebrations. This was because of the number of protests. The official Waitangi Day

celebrations were moved to Wellington, New Zealand's capital, in 2001. From 2003, they were moved back to Waitangi.

The celebrations often begin the evening before Waitangi Day. This year New Zealand's prime minister, John Key, visited a marae in Waitangi on the evening of February 5. A marae is an area of land **sacred** to Maori people. A marae often includes a building, used as a meeting house.

When Mr. Key was walking to the marae, two men in the crowd ran out and pushed him. Both were arrested. One of the organizers of Maori protests said she was embarrassed by what the men did. She insisted they were not part of the official protest. The protest organizer said she had worked with police to make sure people had the right to protest without there being any violence.

Officials at the Waitangi Treaty grounds said as many as 50,000 people visited on February 6. There were celebrations in many other places, too. The original Treaty document is displayed at the National Archive in Wellington. ■

AFRICAN UNION MEETING



The African Union (AU) is an organization of countries in Africa. It was set up in 2001 and has 53 member countries. Between January 26, and February 3, it held its 12th meeting, or summit. The meeting was held in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia, where the AU has its headquarters. Most of the leaders of the 53 member countries attended.

During the meeting, Muammar Gaddafi, the president of Libya, was chosen as the new **chairman** of the AU. He will take over from Jakaya Kikwete, the president of Tanzania.

The chairman of the AU holds the position for one year. Different areas of Africa take turns to propose the chairman. This year it was the turn of North African countries. President Gaddafi was the only leader of a North African country who put his name forward to become chairman.



Muammar Gaddafi, president of Libya

Muammar Gaddafi – also known as Colonel Gaddafi – is a **controversial** leader. He seized power in Libya in 1969 and has ruled the country for 40 years. During this time there have been no proper democratic elections for the position of president in Libya.

In the past, Colonel Gaddafi has been accused of planning and supporting terrorist attacks. In the 1990s Libya started to develop nuclear weapons. Many governments refused to deal with Libya and stopped their countries from trading with Libya or buying its oil.

In 2003, Colonel Gaddafi surprised many people by announcing he had stopped his country's nuclear plans and that he would no longer support terrorism. The U.S. and European Union (EU) member countries welcomed the news. Now several leaders have visited the country, and companies are able to trade with Libya once more.

For some time President Gaddafi has said he believes Africa should become a single country. Each African country would then be a state of the United States of Africa. This, he says, would be similar to the United States of America. The Libyan leader thinks Africa should have one government, one army and one currency. President Gaddafi also thinks all Africans should have the same kind of passports and be able to move to, or live in, any African country.

In his speech as the new AU chairman, President Gaddafi claimed democracy does not work well in Africa. He said examples were the recent elections in Kenya, Nigeria and Zimbabwe. When the results of these elections were announced, fighting broke out between the supporters of the political parties that had lost and those that had won.

Much of the AU meeting was spent discussing President Gaddafi's ideas. A few African leaders agree with him but most, especially those that frequently hold successful democratic elections, don't. Those that disagree with the Libyan leader think his idea will never work because few countries would agree to give up their independence. ■

INDIA'S NEW CHEAP "LAPTOP"

The Indian government recently announced it would be producing a low-cost computer device for use by students. It said the price for each device could be as low as \$10. Some people expected the device to be a type of inexpensive laptop. Yet when the device was displayed for the first time, it looked nothing like a laptop.

NewsCAST

SCHOOLZ MINSTER KANT SPEL — Britain's government minister for schools, Jim Knight, has been criticized because his website is full of spelling mistakes. The minister says they are mostly typing errors. He says his spelling is usually very good but he doesn't check his writing carefully enough. His misspellings included "maintainence" for "maintenance", "similiar" for "similar", and "foce" for "force". Mr. Knight is a graduate of Cambridge University. He says when he was at school his teachers were always telling him to check his work more carefully.

Officials explained that the cheap device has really been designed to store documents and computer files. It has two gigabytes of storage space. The device can connect to a special web portal set up by the Indian government. It also has USB ports that can be used to connect to a keyboard and a monitor.

Some people criticized the Indian government for announcing it was planning to produce a cheap laptop when it wasn't a laptop at all. Yet government officials, and the people who designed the device, say newspaper reporters misunderstood what the computing device was. Officials say it was the reporters who first described it as a "cheap laptop".

The Indian government says the device has been designed for use by students at school. It has been named Sākshāt, which means "before your eyes". The device is part of a new government education plan. The plan is meant to make education more widely available to every child in India by using communications technology.

The devices should be ready for use by students within six months. The first ones will cost about \$20, but the government expects to reduce the price to \$10 in the future.

Some people wondered if the new Indian "laptop" would be similar to one produced by a program known as One Laptop Per Child (OLPC). This organization was set up a number of years ago to make cheap laptops for use by children in poorer countries. The organization does not make any money from its laptops. Called XO laptops, these are simple, strong, don't use much electricity and can link to the internet.



XO laptops being used in a school in Africa

At first, OLPC hoped to make the XO laptop for less than \$100. However, this has proved impossible – each one now costs around \$180. Currently, thousands of XO laptops are being used by children in schools in less wealthy countries.

Although the Indian-made device is very different from the XO laptop, it too has been designed to help learning in schools. It is also much cheaper.

The Indian designers say the way they have managed to keep the price so low is to remove everything except for the most basic functions. The device can also be mass-produced. This means as more are made the devices will become even

cheaper to buy. Indian officials hope the devices will eventually be used by many Indian school children.

The device will now be given to lots of different people to test it. These tests should show if the designers need to make changes to improve the device. ■

OCEAN ACIDITY

More than 150 ocean scientists have signed a document called the Monaco Declaration. This document says immediate action must be taken to stop damage to the Earth's ocean [ecosystems](#).

The marine scientists published the Monaco Declaration on January 30. The name of the document comes from the country of Monaco – where a meeting, arranged by the United Nations (U.N.), was held to discuss ocean ecosystems in October.

The Monaco Declaration says the acidity level of the oceans is rising very quickly. This is dangerous for

marine life, especially coral reefs. The Declaration says this problem has been caused by increased amounts of carbon dioxide in the Earth's atmosphere.



Dying coral reef

Liquids, or solutions, are described as either “acid” or “basic”. Whether a solution is an acid or a base depends on its chemical makeup. Pure water is [neutral](#) because it is neither acidic nor basic. The liquid inside the human stomach is slightly acidic. This helps us digest our food. Other common weak acids are vinegar and orange juice.

Stronger acids can be dangerous. For example, if you get a strong acid on your hands it can burn your skin. Strong acids can [corrode](#) surfaces with which they come into contact.

The world's oceans absorb carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. This makes ocean water slightly acidic. The scientists say the extra carbon dioxide produced by humans burning fossil fuels – oil, natural gas and coal – is causing oceans to absorb even more carbon dioxide. This makes the oceans more acidic.

The Monaco Declaration says this extra acidity in the oceans is slowing the growth of coral reefs. The document estimates coral reefs may stop growing completely by 2050 if nothing is done to reduce

the rising levels of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere.

This is important because coral reefs are habitats for thousands of different types of marine life. In some places the reefs also help protect coastline areas from rough seas.

The marine scientists say all countries have to find ways to reduce the amounts of fossil fuels they burn. This, they argue, is the best way of reducing the amount of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and lowering the acidity of the oceans. U.N. member countries are expected to discuss the problem at a U.N. meeting about climate change in December. ■

NEW CONCERT HALL OPENS

A new concert hall has opened in Copenhagen, the capital of Denmark. The Copenhagen Concert Hall has been built to host music performances. It is thought that the building is the most expensive music concert hall ever built.



Copenhagen's new concert hall

Work on the building first began in 2002. The project cost three billion Danish krone (\$504 million). The building has over 53,800 square feet (5,000 square meters) of floor space. There are four different performance areas. Each has been designed for a different number of musicians. The largest performance

NewsCAST

MONA LISA'S "FUNERAL" — The *Mona Lisa* is one of the world's most famous paintings. It is displayed in the Louvre art gallery in Paris, the capital of France. Now the Louvre is displaying a modern artwork inspired by the *Mona Lisa* in the room next to the original painting. The new work shows the *Mona Lisa* surrounded by grey cloudlike images and pictures of skulls. *Mona Lisa* herself has tears in her eyes and paint running down her front. The picture is called *The Funeral of Mona Lisa*. It's the first time a work inspired by the famous painting has been displayed so close to the original.

hall has room for an audience of 1,800 people.

The concert hall was designed by French [architect](#) Jean Nouvel. In 2008, Mr. Nouvel won the Pritzker Prize. This is the world's most highly-regarded prize for architecture. Mr. Nouvel is known for trying new things and experimenting with modern and unusual designs.

The architect calls his new building a “mysterious” parallelepiped. This is a three-dimensional shape of which each face is a parallelogram. The concert hall is built from steel and glass, and is illuminated at night with blue light. Inside, changing light patterns are projected onto the walls. The site on which the concert hall is built will also be used by Denmark's national broadcasting company, DR.

The concert hall opened with a concert from the Danish National Orchestra. The Danish queen, Margrethe the Second, attended. Musicians played in all the hall's different performance spaces. There were jazz and classical musicians and a concert from the national youth choirs. The performances were broadcast live on television and radio.

Mr. Nouvel is now reported to be working on designs for a new concert hall in Paris, the capital of France. This building is expected to open in 2012. ■

CATERPILLARS IDENTIFIED

For several weeks a plague of caterpillars in Liberia has been destroying farmers' crops. Scientists have now worked out the species of caterpillar that is causing the damage.

The plague of caterpillars first began around January 15. Tens of

millions of caterpillars invaded farmland and began eating crops and other plants. Another problem was the waste the caterpillars produced. It polluted water supplies and made them undrinkable. The plague has been so bad that the caterpillars have even gotten into buildings. Some people have had to leave their homes after they were invaded by the caterpillars.



Achaea Catocaloides

At first, experts thought the caterpillars were a species known as army worms. These are the caterpillars of an African moth. The female moth lays between 500 and 1,000 eggs at a time. If all the eggs successfully hatch into army worms, large areas of crops can be destroyed. However scientists are now sure the caterpillars causing the damage in Liberia belong to a species called *Achaea Catocaloides*.

This has surprised some experts. This type of caterpillar is not known to increase suddenly in numbers as army worms do. The caterpillars' numbers are usually kept low by a species of wasp that eats the [larvae](#). Scientists suggest unusual weather conditions might have killed off many of the wasps. This could explain why there has been such a large increase in the number of *Achaea Catocaloides* caterpillars this year.

Officials in Liberia are pleased that the scientists have identified the species of caterpillar causing

all the problems. It means they can now use the right type of [pesticide](#) to control the caterpillars.

The scientists have warned that this species could be even more damaging than army worms. *Achaea Catocaloides* eats a wider range of crops. For example, it will even eat cocoa and coffee plants.

In the affected areas of Liberia many of the caterpillars have now turned into pupae. This means they will soon hatch into adult moths. When they do, the female moths could lay more eggs and cause a second invasion of caterpillars. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) says it could cost \$1.2 million to control the plague of caterpillars.

Liberia has asked other countries to help with its efforts to stop the invasion. Its government has recently formed a special team with other officials from three nearby countries – Cote d'Ivoire, Guinea, and Sierra Leone. Cote d'Ivoire is the world's biggest producer of cocoa, so it is especially worried about the caterpillars spreading across the border from Liberia.

Newsademic.com

Editor: Amber Thody

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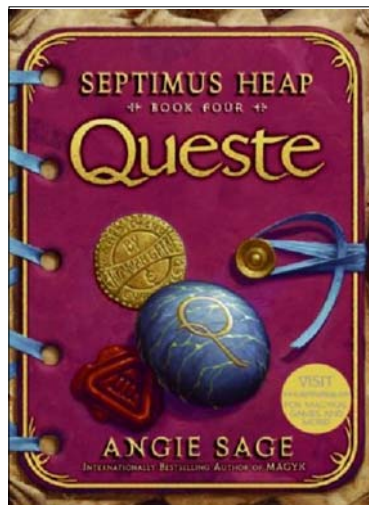
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B O O K R E V I E W

HAVE YOU READ ...?



Most fantasy novels set in old times take us out of the modern world and into another realm where magic really reigns. Yet *Queste*, in an unexpected way, keeps us rooted in the 21st century.

The Septimus Heap series tells about a brother and his adopted sister. Septimus is destined to become a wizard, while Jenna is heir to the Castle's throne.

In *Queste*, 13-year-old villain Merrin Meredith – who was once mistaken for Septimus Heap – is angry. He's tired of working for others in the Observatory. Merrin wants to go to the palace to get revenge on Septimus, using Darke Magyk. Yet he's not a very commanding villain. He tries to conjure a devilish, invisible *Thing* to serve him in his vengeful plans. However, he accidentally conjures twenty-six *Things* – and they won't leave him alone.

In the meantime, Septimus's brother Nicko is lost with his friend Snorri, trapped somewhere in time. Jenna and Septimus have to use all their powers – and those of their friends – to try to rescue their brother and Snorri.

This story has a motley group of humans – wizards, apprentices, royalty, thieves, scholars – as well as ghosts, dragons, enormous worms, beasts and half-beasts, and other monstrous denizens of this fantastic world. There's never a dull moment. The narrative barrels along towards its showdown in the House of Foryx – The Place Where All Times Do Meet.

In this world, words such as “magic” and “quest” are spelled differently and highlighted in a darker font in the book. Yet although this is an old world of fantasy, there's contemporary language, such as characters filling out “job applications” and “networking”, and one character who uses percentages to predict the future safety of the protagonists.

My favorite parts were in the presence of villainous Merrin and his group of watchful *Things*. Merrin is also followed and watched by a kind of rat-spy named Stan-

ley. If you're beginning the series with this book, you'll be wondering when you can learn more about the main characters and spend some time with them as they search for their brother. However, if you've kept up with the series, you'll like the time spent among enemies before taking off with the protagonists.

I enjoyed the part where Septimus and his friends head into dark woods in search of the mysterious House of Foryx and Benjamin Heap, Septimus's father, who seems to have transformed himself into a tree in the Ancient Groves. The pace speeds up here, and more characters – a coven of young witches – join the search.

This novel has some unusual features. Apart from the modern-sounding language, there are hardly any old characters. For instance, Marcellus Pye is an ancient alchemist who looks like a teenager, but moves, speaks and remembers – er, *forgets* – as a very old person might. Also Morwenna – the Witch Mother – is young but wise with her magical knowledge and experience.

This book seems best suited for readers nine and up – it's light and fast-moving, not at all ponderous or gruesome. The illustrations and map by artist Mark Zug make these books all the more fantastic.

Queste is book four of the series. The fifth, *Syren*, is due to be published this year. There will also be a companion book to the series, called *The Magyk Papers*.

Queste: Septimus Heap Book Four by Angie Sage, with illustrations by Mark Zug. Bloomsbury.

Reviewed by **Craig Purdon**

WANT US TO REVIEW A BOOK THAT YOU HAVE READ AND ENJOYED?

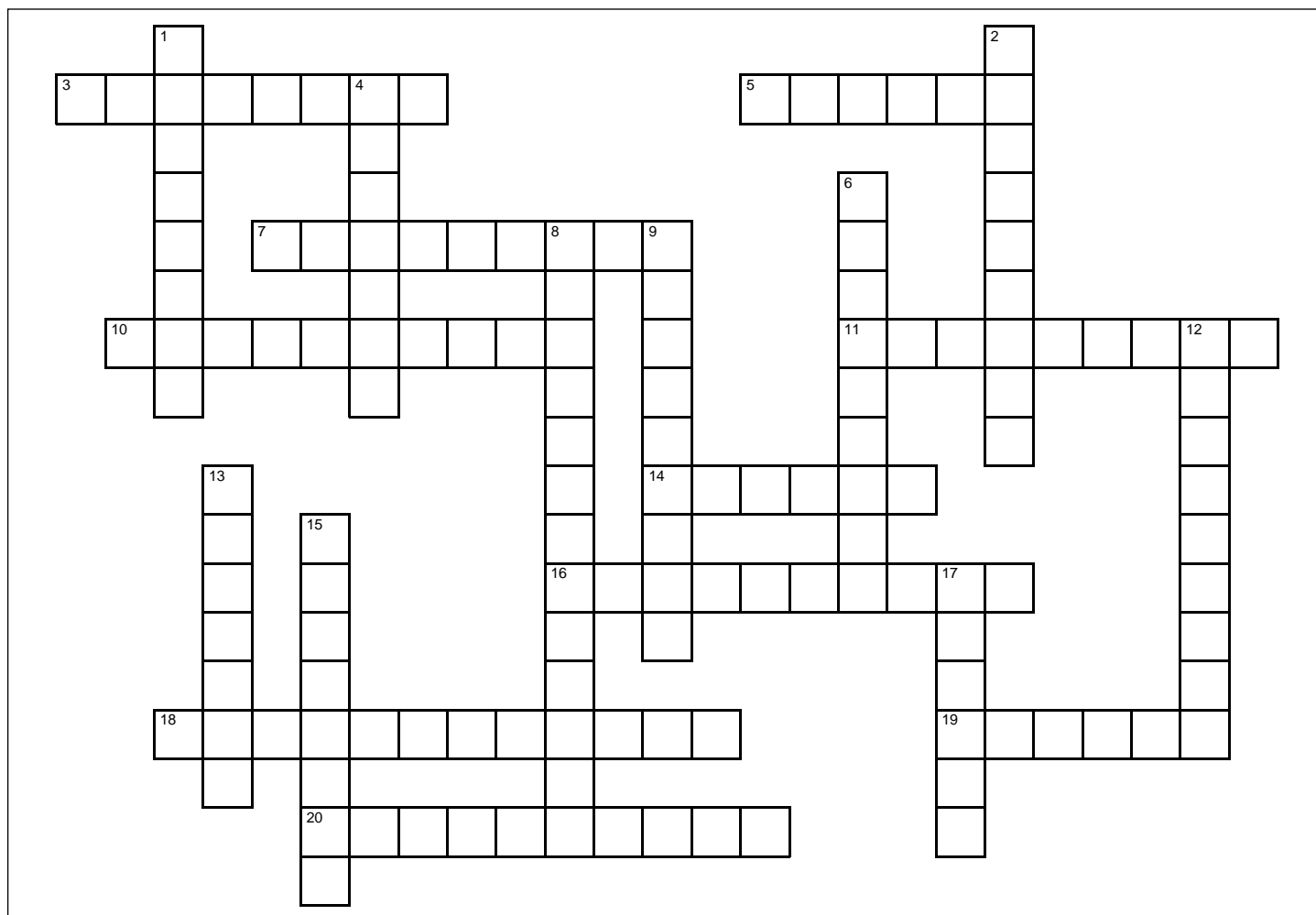
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GLOSSARY

PRIZE COMPETITION

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Complete the crossword. The answers are highlighted in orange in the news stories. There are 25 words highlighted and you need 20 of them to complete the crossword. ② Once you have solved the crossword find the 20 words in the word search on the next page ➡



ACROSS

- 3 Noun (Plural)** Animals, plants or people that live in, or are found in, a particular place (8)
- 5 Noun** A brown metal made of copper and tin (6)
- 7 Noun (Plural)** Man-made objects of historical interest (9)
- 10 Noun** The opinion that people have about someone or something (10)
- 11 Verb** Showed something publicly (9)
- 14 Adjective** Describes something holy or religious (6)
- 16 Noun (Plural)** Communities of living things and the environments in which they live (10)
- 18 Noun (Plural)** The main characters in a story or play (12)
- 19 Noun (Plural)** The state of growth of some insects, when they have hatched from their eggs but are not yet completely developed (6)
- 20 Noun** Expression of sympathy and sadness for the family or close friends of a person who has recently died (10)

DOWN

- 1 Verb** Surrounded and covered something or someone completely (8)
- 2 Noun** A chemical substance used to kill harmful insects, small animals or wild plants (9)
- 4 Adjective** Describes a chemical substance that is neither an acid nor a base (7)
- 6 Verb** To stop something or someone on the way to a destination (9)
- 8 Adjective** Likely to cause arguments (13)
- 9 Noun** A device used to throw objects, such as small stones, at a high speed (9)
- 12 Noun** High level of skill or knowledge (9)
- 13 Noun** Competition with others (7)
- 15 Noun** The time in the year at which the sun is directly above either its furthest point north or its furthest point south of the equator (8)
- 17 Adjective** Describes a mixed group of many different types of people or things (6)

GLOSSARY

PRIZE COMPETITION *CONTINUED*

Y V A L S T S I N O G A T O R P S L
 L R E X H I B I T E D E Y O F M A T
 H D L E R E P U T A T I O N E R E K
 I E N A G S N F Y L R N T T T C B C
 W R W B V L A R V A E T S U N K O M
 N C N A S I M J P K T Y E E X N N D
 P A Q R P L R Y W T S N L Q T L R E
 T S T T W R I K D O P O M R B V E F
 R D V E R K R N C P D E O C D R Z L
 L B Z F L F E E G N E V C E Y B N U
 P J N A Z K P C O S E S N R T G O G
 X Z M C M M V C I R H I T V E V R N
 M T K T O H B G S T Z O M I M T B E
 K L R S T X B I T E S H T K C H N W
 G Z C L L L A Y N L K L C Q B I C I
 L H H T E L P S L M Q P O R K K D R
 N T C K Y R C K M Q M N T S Y X M E
 G J V E S I T R E P X E Z F B Q Z G

INSTRUCTIONS: ③ Find the crossword answers in the word search. Words can go vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back to front. ④ After solving the word search write down the unused letters, starting at the top left and reading from left to right, top to bottom to find the solution. **Hint** - The numbers of letters and words in the solution are shown under the word search.

COMPETITION PRIZES

Glossary Prize Winner

Paperback copy of 'Queste: Septimus Heap Book Four' by Angie Sage

Glossary Prize Runner up

10 free issues of Newsademic

Sudoku Prize Winner

10 free issues of Newsademic

ISSUE NUMBER 85 PRIZE WINNERS

Glossary Competition

Ruth Clarke, U.S.A.
 Helena Page, Britain

Sudoku Competition

James Seito, Thailand

Competition solution (four words with a total of 16 letters)

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ →

Go to www.newsademic.com log in and submit your solution by clicking on the "Enter competition" link within the Subscribers tools menu.

Deadline for receiving your entry is 10 p.m. on February 26, 2009 (GMT/UTC).

COMPETITION RULES:

1 Competition prizes are awarded on a per issue and not a per edition basis. 2 Only one entry per person per competition will be accepted. 3 You must obtain permission from your parent/guardian before entering if you are under 16 years of age. 4 Deadline for receiving entries is at 10 p.m. (GMT) on February 26, 2009. 5 The winners will be randomly selected from all correct entries received. 6 The winners will be contacted by E-mail. Newsademic's decision is final and no correspondence will be entered into. 7 Prizes must be taken as offered. There are no cash alternatives. 8 Newsademic does not accept any responsibility for lost or late entries due to the internet. Proof of submission is not proof of receipt. 9 Prizes won by those who have used a school subscription to enter will be awarded to the individual entrant and not to the school. 10 Competitions are not open to employees or contractors of Newsademic. 11 Newsademic reserves the right to cancel competitions at any stage, if in their opinion it is deemed necessary or if circumstances arise beyond their control. 12 These rules are governed by the laws of England and Wales. 13 When entering competitions entrants will be deemed to have accepted these rules and to agree to be bound by them.

SUDOKU COMPETITION

INSTRUCTIONS: ① Fill the boxes on each horizontal row with a number between 1 and 9. ② Fill the boxes on each vertical row with a number between 1 and 9. ③ Make sure that each number between 1 and 9 also appears in each highlighted 3 x 3 square box. ④ After solving the Sudoku puzzle write down the numbers from the tinted vertical column from top to bottom in the boxes below.

Competition Solution

□ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □ □

	5	2	7			1	3	
9	6							
7			1	5	2	8	9	
		9	8		1	6	5	
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	2		9	4		5	1	8
	4		2		5			