

GENTLE.NEWS

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"From the moment I picked up your book until I put it down, I was convulsed with laughter. Some day I intend reading it."

— Groucho Marx

Brazil's Desert That Is Actually Full of Water

In northeastern Brazil, there is a place that looks like a desert. But it is one of the wettest spots you can imagine. It is called Lençóis Maranhenses National Park. The name means "bedsheets" in Portuguese.

The park is covered in rows of tall white sand dunes. Some rise as high as a ten-story building. The sand is made of sparkling white quartz. From the sky, the dunes look like a giant rumpled bedsheet.

Here is the surprising part. Between the dunes sit hundreds of beautiful blue and green lakes. These are freshwater lagoons, filled by rain each year. The park gets about 50 inches of rain every year. That is more rain than the city of Seattle gets!

The lagoons fill up each spring and early summer. A hidden layer of rock under the sand holds the water in place. NASA satellites recently captured stunning photos of the lagoons at their fullest. The blue water sparkles between the bright white dunes.

By the end of the year, the lakes slowly dry up. Then the rains return, and the magic begins again. It is one of the most beautiful and unusual places on Earth. Nature never stops surprising us.

Smart Computers Are Helping Scientists Make New Discoveries

Scientists are using artificial intelligence, or AI, to make exciting new discoveries. AI is a type of computer program that can learn and solve problems on its own.

A scientist named Ana Kupresanin leads a special team at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory in California. Her team helps researchers use data in smarter ways. Data is information collected from experiments and observations.

Ana's team works to make sure AI can be trusted to give good, accurate results. She says scientific data is not simple. It comes from many sources, each with its own story. Her team helps AI understand that full picture.

The goal is to make AI more helpful and reliable for scientists everywhere. When AI works well with good data, it can speed up research in amazing ways. It might help us find new sources of clean energy or understand nature better than ever before.

A big national program called the Genesis Mission is bringing together the best minds in computing and science. Ana and her team are proud to be part of this effort. Together, they hope AI will help solve some of the biggest challenges facing our world today.

Team Rescues Humpback Whale Tangled in Fishing Ropes

A humpback whale got a second chance at life this summer. A rescue team in California freed the whale from ropes that had been wrapped around it for over a month.

The whale had been caught in crab fishing gear since late May. Whale watching boats spotted it first. They took careful photos and shared them with rescuers. Those pictures helped the team plan how to help.

The rescue team was called Marine Life Studies. Their leader, Peggy Stap, praised the whale watching crews. "We could not do it without them," she said warmly. The whale was freed on July 11th near Moss Landing.

The ropes had cut deeply into the whale's tail and body. A scientist named Dr. Julia O'Hern said the whale was in serious danger. But the team worked carefully and got every rope off safely.

Many groups joined together to make this rescue work. Whale watching crews, scientists, and wildlife officers all helped. When people work as a team, even a giant whale can get a happy ending. The whale swam away free into the open ocean.

Scientists Film the First Moments of a Chemical Reaction

Have you ever wondered what happens at the very start of a chemical reaction? Scientists at a lab in California have found a remarkable way to watch it happen.

Researchers at SLAC National Accelerator Laboratory used a powerful X-ray laser to film tiny particles called electrons. These electrons are what kick off every chemical reaction. They start the process of breaking old bonds and creating new ones between molecules.

The team created a kind of movie, with each frame capturing moments almost too fast to imagine. We are talking about billionths of a billionth of a second. Scientists call this timescale "attoseconds."

The movie revealed two things never seen before in real time. This is a big deal in the world of science. Their findings were published in a respected journal called Nature Physics. Reactions like these happen in medical X-ray settings and even high up in the sky.

This discovery also surprised the scientists themselves. Their results did not match what computers had predicted. That means our understanding of chemistry just got a little bit richer. Science grows every time we find something new and unexpected. What an exciting time to be curious about the world around us!

New Drug Treats Full Range of Narcolepsy Symptoms

A new medicine is bringing hope to people with a rare sleep disorder. The U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved a drug called Orzeyful. It is the first medicine to treat all symptoms of narcolepsy type 1 at once.

Narcolepsy type 1 affects about one in every 2,000 people. It is caused by the loss of brain cells that make a chemical called orexin. Orexin helps the brain stay awake and control sleep. Without it, people struggle to stay alert during the day.

The disorder causes several difficult symptoms. These include feeling very sleepy during the day and sudden muscle weakness. Some people also experience sleep paralysis or vivid dreams while waking up. Until now, no single medicine could treat all of these together.

Orzeyful works in a brand new way. It activates the same brain receptor that orexin normally would. This means it targets the root cause of the disease. Past medicines only masked some symptoms with stimulants or sedatives.

Doctors are excited about this breakthrough. "This is the first medicine that impacts the underlying biology of the disease," said Dr. Tiffany Farchione of the FDA. People with narcolepsy type 1 now have a real reason to feel hopeful about better days ahead.

Activity Time - Word Search

Find the words below in the puzzle. Words go across or down only.

Words to Find:

RESEARCH

LAGOON

OREXIN

QUARTZ

BRAIN

DATA

SAND

