

# GENTLE.NEWS

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*"Wisdom comes from experience. Experience is often a result of lack of wisdom."*

— Terry Pratchett

### **Astronauts Help Scientists Learn How Space Affects The Body**

A new team of astronauts is heading to the International Space Station. They will help scientists learn how living in space changes the human body.

The mission is called Crew-13. It includes four astronauts from the United States, Canada, and Russia. Together, they will run important health experiments while living in space.

One big study looks at blood flow. In space, there is no gravity. This can slow down blood moving through the body. Scientists want to understand why this happens to some astronauts but not others. Finding answers will help keep future space travelers safe and healthy.

The astronauts will also test piloting skills and help scientists protect eyesight and brain health during long missions. When they return to Earth, special tools will measure the forces their bodies feel during landing.

This research will help make space travel safer for everyone who goes in the future. It may also teach doctors new things about the human body that could help people right here on Earth. Every discovery made in space brings us one step closer to understanding ourselves.

### Scientists Guard Volcano Islands in the Pacific

Far out in the Pacific Ocean sit the beautiful islands of American Samoa. These islands were formed by volcanoes long ago. Scientists are working hard to keep the people there safe.

Back in 2022, thousands of earthquakes shook the islands for weeks. This was a scary time. Scientists from the U.S. Geological Survey moved quickly. They set up special stations to watch for any signs of danger. These stations measure ground movement day and night.

This year, scientists traveled back to check on the equipment. The islands have thick jungle plants and salty sea air. Both can damage the stations over time. The team worked to fix and clean everything. It is not easy work, but it matters a great deal.

The scientists also visited local schools. They taught children about volcanoes, earthquakes, and giant ocean waves called tsunamis. Learning about these things helps everyone stay safer. The children were excited to meet real scientists.

The people of American Samoa and the scientists have built a warm friendship. They work as a team all year long. Even from far away, scientists watch over the islands every day. These visits remind us that caring for one another makes the world a better place.

### **Young Artists Help Birds Soar in Utah Contest**

A wonderful thing happened in Utah this year. Many more young students entered an art contest about birds. The number of students grew from 78 to 524 in just one year!

The contest is called the Junior Duck Stamp Program. Students draw and paint pictures of wild birds and wetland animals. It is run by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

A young intern named Gabrielle Johnson helped make this happen. She works at Bear River Migratory Bird Refuge in Utah. She traveled all across the state to visit schools and share the program with teachers and students.

Gabrielle and other interns brought art supplies to students who needed them. They also visited nature centers and universities. Student artwork was displayed at Utah State University and Southern Utah University for everyone to enjoy.

The program brought students, teachers, and nature lovers together. It helped young people learn about birds and wetlands through art. Everyone worked as a team, and the results were truly amazing.

### **A Banjo That Collected Famous Names**

In 1939, a musician named Frank Warner went to a party in New York City. He brought something special with him — a handmade banjo from North Carolina.

A craftsman named Nathan Hicks had made the banjo by hand from beautiful walnut wood. Frank loved it right away. That night, he had a wonderful idea.

A famous poet named Carl Sandburg was at the party. Frank asked him to sign the banjo. Sandburg smiled and wrote his name on the wood. That small moment started something truly magical.

Frank kept asking famous folk musicians to sign it. Woody Guthrie signed it. So did Pete Seeger and Lead Belly. Soon, 260 signatures covered the banjo. Each name told a story of America's rich music history. The names wrapped around the body twice and even climbed up the neck.

For thirty years, Frank and his wife Anne traveled across America together. They collected over 1,000 old songs and stories. Frank played that beloved banjo everywhere they went. Today, the Library of Congress keeps their recordings safe for everyone. That little banjo became a treasure of American folk music — and a reminder that one small moment can grow into something truly wonderful.

### Scientists Watch Heat Shields Protect Spacecraft in Real Time

When a spacecraft returns to Earth, it faces incredible heat. The outside of the vehicle can reach over 3,000 degrees Fahrenheit. That is hotter than most things we can imagine!

To stay safe, spacecraft use special shields. These shields are made of smart materials. The materials slowly burn away on the outside. This protects the crew and the ship inside. Scientists call this process "ablation."

For many years, engineers could only look at shields before and after tests. They could not watch what happened in between. Now, that has changed! Scientists at a lab in California found a way to watch the process as it happens.

Using powerful X-ray cameras and computers trained with AI, they can now see tiny changes inside the shield material in real time. They capture detailed 3D pictures of the shield as it heats up. This helps engineers build better, safer shields for future space missions.

This discovery has already helped NASA's Artemis program, which is sending astronauts back toward the Moon. Better heat shields mean safer trips for the brave men and women who travel to space. It is wonderful news for space exploration!

## Activity Time - Word Search

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

### Words to Find:

MISSION

ARTWORK

STATION

SENSOR

WALNUT

BLOOD

XRAY

