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## Middle School Weekly



Emphasizing both News and Academics

The Middle School Weekly is published in 34 4-page issues from August 29 to May 1 - except for two winter issues plus the summer bonus issue for a total of 35 issues.

December 10, 2007

Volume 22/16

1) Name the North Sea nation whose prime minister says it will have a new vote within 4 years on whether to adopt the euro to replace its krone. Queen Margrethe II has held the throne since 1972.

**Answer: Denmark (it last rejected euro in 2000).**

2) An underground grotto just unveiled in Rome is believed to be the Lupercal, revered by ancient Romans as the cave where which animal nurtured the abandoned twins Romulus and Remus?

**Answer: Wolf (*lupis* is Latin for "wolf").**

3) To what continent was the Canadian cruise ship *Explorer* headed when it hit submerged ice and sank, forcing its 154 passengers and crew to take to lifeboats off islands south of Chile?

**Answer: Antarctica (all 154 were saved by another cruise ship).**

4) Spell the name of the continent where the South Pole is located.

**Answer: A-N-T-A-R-C-T-I-C-A.**

5) Complete the name *Red* \_\_\_\_\_ for the Iraqi arm of the Red Cross, which has said 2.3 million Iraqi, mostly Sunni, have fled their homes and are refugees within the country.

**Answer: Red Crescent (Iraq, however, says thousands who fled country have come back recently).**

6) In which country, until now a staunch U.S. ally in Iraq, did the newly elected prime minister, as promised, immediately sign paperwork to ratify the Kyoto Protocol on global warming and vow to withdraw troops from Iraq upon taking the post in Canberra?

**Answer: Australia (new P.M. Kevin Rudd soundly defeated Conservative P.M. John Howard).**

7) After trying electric fences, Indian officials have begun greasing fences with pepper oil to keep which wild animals, also called pachyderms, from trampling towns and crops?

**Answer: Elephants (India has world's largest population of Asian elephants, est. at 28,250).**

8) Which U.S. state, long called the Land of Enchantment, is featuring grotesque creatures from outer space in TV ads promoting it as "the best place in the Universe," though no mention is made of its famed alleged 1947 UFO crash in its desert near Roswell?

**Answer: New Mexico (U.S. military claims 1947 crash was a weather balloon).**

9) For the 3rd time in 130 years, the U.S. Supreme Court is considering Delaware and New Jersey's dispute over which river Washington crossed to beat the British?

**Answer: Delaware (current dispute is over building of a liquefied natural gas plant on the Jersey side).**

10) Identify the given name of both Justice Stevens, who just became the Supreme Court's 2nd oldest member ever, and naval officer Jones credited as Father of the U.S. Navy.

**Answer: John Paul (Stevens, just turned 87; and John Paul Jones, father of Navy).**

11) Name the oldest ever justice of the Supreme Court, the son and namesake of the poet and physician with initials O.W.H. who wrote the poem "Old Ironsides."

**Answer: Oliver Wendell Holmes, Jr. (he retired from Court at age 90 in 1932).**

12) What word designates either the kind of appointment not requiring confirmation that the Congress just kept President Bush from making by taking turns standing in the Senate to keep it in session over Thanksgiving, or an outside break during a school day?

**Answer: Recess (appointments; break in school day is called a recess).**

13) Which state recently set Wednesday, January 8 as the date for its 2007 primary, thus claiming its traditional spot as the first primary in the U.S.?

**Answer: New Hampshire (primary is U.S.'s earliest ever; Iowa caucuses begin Jan. 3).**

14) Though economists say "core" inflation rate is low, or about 2%, eggs now cost \$1.35, as opposed to about 90 cents last year, meaning they've increased by what percent?

**Answer: 50% (economists don't count food/fuel cost in "core" because their costs rise/fall quickly).**

15) As usual procedure, what did a hospital administer to V.P. Dick Cheney to correct his atrial fibrillation, or abnormal heart rhythm, right away during his recent 2½ hour stay?

**Answer: Electric shock (atrial refers to upper chambers of the heart).**

16) Identify the number of categories on the widely used hurricane strength scale introduced in 1969 by Herbert Saffir, who recently died at age 90.

**Answer: 5 (Category 5 being the most destructive; scale was expanded by Robert Simpson).**

#### **HISTORICAL EVENTS - December 10-16 (Questions 17-24)**

17) Which Nobel prize was presented to American Dr. Ralph Bunche on December 10, 1950, making him the first black man to win this award?

**Answer: Peace prize (for helping mediate between Israel and Arab states in 1949).**

18) Which U.S. President was the first American to win a Nobel prize? On December 10, 1906, he was awarded the peace prize for his efforts to end the Russo-Japanese War.

**Answer: Theodore Roosevelt.**

19) Which country ceded the Philippines to the U.S. for \$20 million on December 10, 1898?

**Answer: Spain.**

20) In which 2 cities are the Nobel Prizes awarded on December 10, the anniversary of the death of Alfred Nobel? These cities are the capitals of Norway and Sweden.

**Answer: Oslo (Norway) and Stockholm (Sweden).**

21) Name the country Dutch navigator Abel Tasman discovered on December 13, 1642, off Australia's southeast shore.

**Answer: New Zealand.**

22) Which event took place in Boston on December 16, 1773, when patriots boarded British vessels and threw 342 chests into the harbor?

**Answer: Boston Tea Party.**

23) The Spanish phrase *Las posadas*, meaning "the inns," names the 9-day Mexican festival marking Mary and Joseph's search for lodgings in Bethlehem, a town in the territory today known as the West Bank, located west of which river?

**Answer: Jordan River (*posada* also means "shelter"; celebration is held 12/16-24).**

24) Complete the name of Hungarian composer Antonín Dvorák's *New \_\_\_\_\_ Symphony*, which premiered 100 years ago at Carnegie Hall on December 16, 1893.

**Answer: World.**

25) What is the square root of the quantity  $4/5 - 4/25$ ?

**Answer: 4/5 or 0.8.**

26) What is the result when 2 yards 1 foot is reduced by 1 yard 2 feet 2 inches?

**Answer: 1 foot 10 inches or 22 inches.**

27) If the sum of the five Smith children's ages is 60 years and their ages are consecutive multiples of 3, then what is the age of the youngest child?

**Answer: 6.**

28) What is the length of the longest side of a triangle if the sides are in a 3:4:6 ratio and the triangle's perimeter is 65 feet?

**Answer: 30 feet.**

29) A scientist notes that the size of an 8-foot-long 390-million-year-old scorpion fossil shows it had the upper hand over backboned animals, or those known by which name?

**Answer: Vertebrates (which, of course, include humans).**

30) In general, which animal has the largest brain in the animal kingdom, weighing in at about 11 pounds?

**Answer: Elephant.**

31) Name the planet where a European Space Agency mission just found signs of lightning and evidence it might have once had oceans, confirming its role as Earth's twin.

**Answer: Venus.**

32) Use the initials B.C. to name the antioxidant found in carrots that a recent study report may help prevent mental decline in aging men.

**Answer: Beta carotene (also found in other orange/yellow foods like sweet potatoes).**

33) Use the initial letter C to name the group of subjects in the beta carotene study that were given a *placebo* rather than a daily dose of carotene equivalent to 4 carrots.

**Answer: Control (group; used to see effect of drug on the half who took carotene over 3 years).**

34) What word beginning with *C* is used to describe the pessimistic tone of British theologian William R. Inge's line: "A nation is a society united by delusions about its ancestry and by common hatred of its neighbors"?

**Answer: Cynical (meaning "casting doubt on the goodness of human motives").**

35) What word omitted from the 1928 Oxford English Dictionary for being an ugly Latinization coined by doctors survived to designate inflammation of the small tube in the lower right side of the abdomen?

**Answer: Appendicitis (new Shorter O.E.D., by contrast, includes such Latinizations as *genericize*).**

36) What compound word is used to designate a river area filled with rapids, such as West Virginia's New River area popular with rafters and used in ads promoting tourism?

**Answer: Whitewater.**

37) Name the popular sports drink created for University of Florida football players in 1965 by Dr. Robert Cade, who just died at age 80, as a means to replace carbohydrates and electrolytes lost through sweat.

**Answer: Gatorade (Florida's teams are called Gators; now sold in 80 countries in dozens of flavors).**

38) Which U.S. tree virtually wiped out by a fungus by 1950 and known in song for its nuts "roasted on an open fire" are breeders trying to return to forests in the East?

**Answer: Chestnut (specifically, American chestnut; breeders are closing in on blight-resistant variety).**

39) Which state is selling via e-Bay its *Chinook* and *Snohomish* ferries that once carried passengers across Puget Sound between its largest city and Bremerton?

**Answer: Washington (state says it will no longer operate passenger-only ferries).**

40) Identify the 2 bordering states whose quarters bearing, respectively, a Zia Indian sun symbol and the Grand Canyon will be the first of 5 released in 2008 to end the series.

**Answer: New Mexico and Arizona (entered union in 1912; quarters issued in order of admission).**

### GIFTS AND PURCHASES

- Present** . . . . . Synonym for *gift* that also means "right now"
- Magi** . . . . . as a group, the 3 wise men of the East who took gifts to infant Jesus
- Myrrh/Frankincense** . . . . . Gum resins for perfumes that the Bible says the wise men gave to Jesus
- Kris Kringle** . . . . . Pennsylvania Dutch alliterative name for the Santa Claus gift-giver, as used in the film *Miracle on 34th Street*
- Hanukkah** . . . . . 8-day Jewish holiday during which a gift called *gelt*, Yiddish for "money," is traditionally distributed to children
- 25th** . . . . . Anniversary traditionally honored by gifts of silver
- (Gift of) gab** . . . . . Alliterative word in the phrase *gift of \_\_\_\_\_* meaning "ease of speaking"
- (Gift) horse** . . . . . Animal named in the saying "Don't look a gift \_\_\_\_\_ in the mouth," alluding to the fact that the animal's mouth can reveal its age and health
- (White) elephant** . . . . . Animal named in the idiom *white \_\_\_\_\_* for a gift not wanted or needed, alluding to animals sacred in Buddhism and thus of no practical value
- Poison apple** . . . . . Gift the queen disguised as an old hag brings to Snow White, sending her into a long sleep in Grimm's fairy tale
- Greeks** . . . . . People named in Virgil's line "Whatever it is, I fear \_\_\_\_\_ even when they bring gifts," alluding to an event of the Trojan War
- Trojan horse** . . . . . Gift the Greeks put outside Troy's gates to enable them to enter and attack the city
- Statue of Liberty** . . . . . France's 1886 gift to the U.S. to commemorate its centennial, inscribed with the words *La liberté éclairant le monde*\*
- Cherry trees** . . . . . Japan's 1912 gift to Washington, D.C., numbering about 3,000
- Manhattan** . . . . . Island that Governor Peter Minuit of New Netherland purchased from Indians in 1626 for about \$24 in goods
- Thomas Jefferson** . . . . . President who purchased c. 828 sq. miles of land from France in 1803
- Alaska** . . . . . U.S. 1867 land purchase opponents called Seward's Folly when Secretary of State Seward purchased it from Russia for about 2 cents an acre
- Rockefeller** . . . . . Wealthy family who in 1946 gave the U.N. \$8.5 million to purchase 18 acres of prime Manhattan land to be used for its headquarters
- \*Translated as "Liberty Enlightening the World"

