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Middle School Weekly

Emphasizing both News and Academics

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August 27, 2007

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- 1) California just banned sale of soccer shoes made from the hide of which animal that is a symbol of Australia, and so prevalent there that herds must be culled periodically to keep them from starving?

Answer: Kangaroo (both the kangaroo and emu appear on Australia's seal).

- 2) Name the country that recently held Southeast Asia's largest tsunami evacuation along its Andaman coast west of Bangkok where tsunamis killed over 8,000 in December 2004.

Answer: Thailand.

- 3) Under which strait would the tunnel proposed as part of a 3,700-mile transport corridor linking Russia with Alaska pass?

Answer: Bering Strait.

- 4) Between which 2 oceans will the 2 Americans engaged in a triple circumnavigation of the world sail when they round Cape Horn?

Answer: Atlantic and Indian (embarked 4/2007; see web @1000days.net).

5) Which world capital is now offering rental bikes at cheap rates at 750 self-service docking stations to promote pollution-free travel down its Champs-Elysées and elsewhere?
Answer: Paris (under *Vélib* program, from French *vélo*, for "bicycle," and *liberté*, for "freedom").

6) Name either of the 2 places whose names begin with *T* that protested scheduled stops in them on the 85,000-mile torch relay for the 2008 Beijing Olympics since both see the stops as a Chinese effort to assert its control over them.

Answer: Taiwan (China considers it a "rebel" province) or Tibet (an autonomous region of China).

7) In July, which South American country had snow in its capital for the 1st time since 1918 when frigid air from Antarctica swept up from its tip, forcing closure of the tunnel between it and Chile to its west?

Answer: Argentina (its capital is Buenos Aires).

8) Which world capital is being threatened by huge sinkholes as a result of having been built on a drained lake bed after the Spanish destroyed the Aztec capital and today drawing off more and more water from its underground aquifer for its water supply?

Answer: Mexico City.

9) In an effort to claim what could be huge energy sources beneath the Arctic Ocean, which country recently sent 2 mini-submarines to plant on the seabed beneath the North Pole its flag adopted in 1991 to replace its former hammer and sickle flag?

Answer: Russia (flag was in titanium capsule; hammer and sickle was an emblem of its Communist era).

10) Name the country with which President Bush recently tried to repair relations in talks with its new President Nicolas Sarkozy at the Bush home in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Answer: France.

11) Name the large resort lake on the California-Nevada border where a blaze started by an illegal campfire destroyed more than 200 homes in July.

Answer: Lake Tahoe.

12) Which state capital, long the U.S.'s most populous, is now the 5th ranked most populous U.S. city after New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and Houston, respectively?

Answer: Phoenix.

13) Name the U.S. President whose privately operated library in Yorba Linda, California, was just turned over to federal archivists, including tapes related to Watergate.

Answer: Richard M. Nixon (up to now, library has glossed over his guilt in Watergate scandal).

14) Name the state where researchers set out in July to search for evidence of the legendary creature Bigfoot, or Sasquatch, in its Upper Peninsula.

Answer: Michigan (legend of Bigfoot dates back centuries).

15) Identify the Mars lander launched in August made from hardware shelved after failed Mars ventures in 1999 and thus named as if it arose from the ashes of canceled missions
Answer: Phoenix (for mythic bird that consumed itself by fire every 500 years and rose from its ashes).

16) Identify the German scientist called the father of modern astronomy for whom the telescope NASA is set to launch in 2009 to find new Earth-sized planets is named.

Answer: Johannes Kepler (NASA hopes powerful Kepler scope will help detect 50 Earth-like planets).

HISTORICAL EVENTS - August 1-September 2 (Questions 17-24)

17) On August 2, 1776, in which U.S. city did 50 of the 56 signers officially sign the Declaration of Independence?

Answer: Philadelphia.

18) When Congress approved the "Gulf of Tonkin Resolution" on August 7, 1964, which President was given the authority to do whatever was necessary in Vietnam?

Answer: Lyndon Johnson.

19) On August 9, 1945, which Japanese city became the second hit by an atomic bomb?

Answer: Nagasaki (the Allies dropped an atomic bomb on Hiroshima on 8/6/1945).

20) How many years elapsed between the closing of the border between East and West Berlin on August 13, 1961, and the dismantling of the Berlin Wall, November 9, 1989?
Answer: 28 years.

21) Name the North Carolina island where Virginia Dare was born August 18, 1587, as the first child of English parents to be born in America.
Answer: Roanoke Island (by 1591, the settlers of this colony had disappeared).

22) In which decade did Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. deliver his "I Have a Dream" speech on August 28 during the march he led on Washington?
Answer: 1960s (1963).

23) Which country lying between Germany and the former Soviet Union did Germany invade on September 1, 1939, to start World War II?
Answer: Poland.

24) What word meaning "countries working together for a common goal" names the group of nations including the U.S. to whom Japan surrendered on September 2, 1945?
Answer: Allies (the Japanese informally surrendered on August 14).

25) For what value of x is the fraction $\frac{7-x}{x+3}$ equal to 4?
Answer: -1.

26) What is the prime factorization of twelve raised to the second power?
Answer: $2^4 \cdot 3^2$.

27) What is the simplified result for the fractional statement $\left(\frac{2A}{x} - \frac{A}{2x} \right)$?
Answer: $\frac{3A}{2x}$.

28) What is the height of a right triangle whose base is 20 inches and whose area is 280 square inches?
Answer: 28 inches.

29) What does zero-g mean as used by Stephen Hawking in speaking of his weightless flips 32,000 ft. above Earth after having been confined to a wheelchair for almost 4 decades?
Answer: Zero-gravity (Hawking has ALS, or Lou Gehrig's disease, can't talk or move hands or legs).

30) Give the Greek prefix for "star" that completes the term _____ physicist designating Stephen Hawking as a physicist who has studied black holes and other bodies in space.
Answer: Astro (as in astrophysicist).

31) What name beginning with M is given to the line of geographic positioning over which the sun crosses at the time designated as solar noon at the observer's location?
Answer: Meridian (imaginary circle running through poles with all points on it having same longitude).

32) Where will a shadow cast by a vertical pole point at solar noon?
Answer: Directly north or south.

33) The *New York Times* recently offered for sale limited edition bird prints made from engravings by which 19th-century artist for whom national birdwatching society is named?
Answer: John James Audubon (he published his watercolors in *The Birds of America*, 1827-38).

34) In terms of architecture, what part of a Muslim mosque is a minaret, such as those destroyed at a Shiite shrine in Samarra north of Baghdad in June?
Answer: Tower (with a balcony from which people are called to prayer).

35) Give the 2-word alliterative name for London's Great Bell that sounds the hour for Parliament's clock tower recently silenced for 4 to 6 weeks for repairs.
Answer: Big Ben.

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36) A tunnel to be opened next year will give auto access to one of the last isolated inhabited valleys in the Alps in which country featured in *The Sound of Music*?

Answer: Austria.

37) Identify the country where in late spring a 55-panel 12th-century mural depicting Buddha's life was found in a cave northwest of Katmandu.

Answer: Nepal.

38) Identify the country whose capital has been named a European Cultural Capital for 2007 and whose name accounts for the last syllable of *Benelux* in naming a 3-nation group.
Answer: Luxembourg (Benelux countries are Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg).

39) Name the ursine animal featured as Nanu and friend of the infant walrus Seela in National Geographic's movie *Arctic Tale*, made from 800 hours of film shot at the Arctic Circle over the last 15 years.

Answer: Polar bears (written partly by Al Gore's daughter, focuses on hardship caused by melting ice)

40) Name the late Jim Henson's green puppet that along with 500 to 700 others his foundation recently donated to Atlanta's Center for Puppetry Arts, the largest in the U.S.

Answer: Kermit the Frog.

IN OTHER NEWS

Boy Scouts . . . Group that held its 21st World Jamboree near London on the 100th anniversary of its founding by British war hero Robert Baden-Powell

Pakistan/India . 2 "subcontinent" countries that on August 14 marked the 60th anniversary of independence from British control long advocated by Mahatma Gandhi

Canary . . . Spanish islands off Morocco's coast where thousands fled wildfires in August, named for dogs found there though later linked with a songbird

Monsoon(s) . . . Seasonal rains leaving over 1,200 deaths in India by mid-August

Dead Sea . . . Salty sea where an 8-year-old Israeli boy stayed afloat for 6 hours alone at night before being rescued, the lowest point on Earth

Mississippi . . . River into which a 1967 interstate bridge in Minnesota's Twin Cities collapsed with 100 cars and a school bus atop it, leaving 13 dead

Wall Street Journal Well-known newspaper of the business world acquired by Rupert Murdoch with his media conglomerate's \$5 billion purchase of Dow Jones

Coast Guard . . . Federal marine agency that just marked its 217th birthday, having tallied over 1 million saved lives, known for its academy in New London, CT

Tiger Woods . . . Golfer who at Tulsa, OK, won his 4th PGA championship, for a career total of 13 majors

San Antonio . . . Home of the Spurs that won the NBA championship, defeating the Cleveland Cavaliers in 4 games

Philadelphia Phillies Major League Baseball franchise that in the summer lost its 10,000th game, founded in 1883 as the Quakers

Hank Aaron . . . "Homerun King" whose 755 record homeruns was recently surpassed by Barry Bonds amid controversy over steroid use

Pro Football . . . Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, that inducted Thurman Thomas, Roger Wehrli, Michael Irvin, Charlie Sanders, Clay Matthews, Gene Hickerson

Ratatouille . . . Stew of eggplant, zucchini, tomatoes, onions, and peppers named in the title of the summer film featuring Parisian rat Remy