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News

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Summer time is here! Get ready for the Convention!

Can you believe it's time for the annual Convention already? Wow, how time flies!

I am sorry to say Ron and I won't be able to make it there this year; our poor house needs a new roof, so while you're all out having fun, we'll be spending our shaker money on shingles and nails, and wishing we were there instead!

We hope you all have a wonderful time, find lots of shakers and have loads of fun! Be sure to send me some pictures so I can feature them in the next newsletter.

I don't want to give away too much info, but I know you're in for a good time this year! Just keep your eyes open and look for special activities just for you! Here's a few shakers to get you started "Jazzing it Up".



These older, made in Japan horses (above) and goats (below) sure seem to know how to jazz it up!



Jazz Players, by Clay-Art c.1995



Unusual Animals

I was going through my collection and discovered some unusual critters. I thought I'd share them with you. Can you identify them? Keep reading other pages for the answers!



Wow, this is a strange one! Is it a rabbit, a squirrel, a kangaroo, or something else? I'll give you a clue: It is real, it lives in Bolivia, Argentina, Peru and Chile, in South America in the Andes Mountain region. Many people have this shaker set, but don't know what it is...but you will by the time you're finished reading this edition.

How about these prickly little critters? No, they are not porcupines, to whom they are not related!



Now here's a strange looking creature! It lives in the water, has a flipper/paddle for a tail, flipper like arms, but is not a fish! Nor is it a seal, sea lion, or walrus.

(Those who live in or visit Florida, parts of Africa, the Amazon areas or the West Indies might know what it is!)





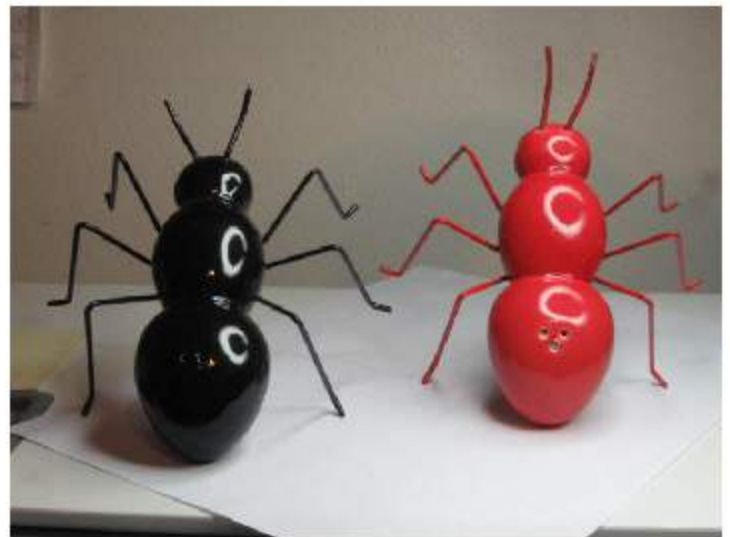
Here's a couple animals you may recognize. The one on the left was made by Leydon Arts of California, while the one on the right was made by Ceramic Arts Studio of Wisconsin; both were made in other colors.



You might at first, think these are logs floating in the water when you see them, but look again! They're furry weasel creatures, with webbed feet (like ducks), are known to carry rocks on their undersides as they float around, smashing their food (clams and other shellfish) against the rock to crack it open. Do you know what they are?



You might not find these little creatures strange... you probably see them all the time and rarely give them a second thought. They are pests at picnics, in pantries, and pretty annoying, too! But, they are special in their own ways!



ANIMAL MYSTERIES SOLVED!



So just what is that rabbit/squirrel creature?

It's called a Viscacha. It is any of four species of slender yet fairly large South American rodents similar to chinchillas:

They have short forelimbs, long hind limbs, and a long, bushy tail. The soft fur is long and dense, and the soles of the feet have fleshy pads.

Viscacha can reach up to about 18" long, with a tail to match, and can weigh up to about 8 pounds.



Hedgehogs are small meat-eating (carnivorous) animals that weigh about 2 pounds. Their name comes from their habit of foraging around hedges and shrubbery, searching for insects, worms, snakes and other smaller critters.

Hedgehogs are not closely related to porcupines, their quills, which are made mostly of keratin (hair) do not propel outward at attackers. When attacked, hedgehogs simply curl into a prickly ball and stay extremely still, making a rather unpleasant sensation on the mouths of whatever is attacking them.

Hedgehogs are found in Asia, Europe, Africa, and New Zealand and usually live in burrows.

Manatees are large aquatic animals that can be up to about 13ft long and can weigh up to around 3000 pounds! While sometimes called sea cows, they are not related to cows, but rather to elephants.

Once mistaken for mermaids, manatees are vegetarian animals who live in warm coastal waters, canals and rivers; they do not come onto land.





Seahorses are mysterious little creatures. While they have a "horse head", they are actually fish. There are about 25 species of these tiny critters, and they swim about in an upright position using their tails and fins to steer. Seahorses linger around seaweed, coral and other things, holding on with their tails so they don't get swept away. Female seahorses lay eggs which they deposit into a "brood pouch" on the male, who then carries the eggs around until they are born. Sadly, seahorses are endangered due to habitat destruction, capturing and keeping as pets, and other occurrences.



Believe it or not, the coral that the seahorse sits among is not a plant! It is in fact, an animal. Corals are sessile; creatures that permanently attach themselves to the ocean floor, similar to what plants do, but unlike plants, coral cannot make their own food. Instead, they draw it into their mouths with tentacle-like arms! There are several hundred different types of coral, and each type lives in different climates and in groups called reefs, regenerating themselves from one generation to another!



Pictured at left, this river otter lives at the Detroit Zoo in a special enclosure full of a pond, rocks, plants, a stream and even a water slide! (He's a bit of a show-off, too!)

There are 13 species of otters, ranging in size from 2ft to 6ft in length. Their nostrils and ears close to keep water out, and waterproof fur keeps them warm; they're not covered in a fatty layer like other seagoing creatures. Otters have the densest fur of any animal—as many as a million hairs per square inch in places. Otters are becoming endangered due to a variety of human activity.

Sometimes ants are confused with termites, but they are visually different. Ants have a distinct waist-line, whereas termites do not; they are actually closer in relation to bees and wasps! With over 12,000 known species, ants truly are interesting in their own right. You might not like them, but once you get to know them a little, you have to respect them.



Ants are extremely social, living together in nests which may have millions of family members, each holding down jobs, and doing whatever is necessary to survive. (Not unlike us humans, actually.) Some gather food, some build the nest, some act as daycare providers, some protect the queen, and some attack and raid other ant families! Still others will come to the rescue of an injured member, often times carrying it back to the nest.

Able to lift more than 20 times their own body weight, ants are incredibly strong! If you watch closely, you'll see that they work together, carrying food and supplies along a trail to and from their nests.



Happy Birthday!

Katie Stroba 6/25
Awbree Pawlikowski 7/14
Josh Marks 8/9
Emma Luft 8/27
Sarah Moats 8/30



Wishing you all a wonderful summer!
Have fun at the convention and make sure
to send me some pictures to use in a future
newsletter!



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I was going to wait to announce this, but there's no time like the present. Due to changes in my job and personal life, I regretfully have to step down as your newsletter editor. I will continue until a replacement is appointed, so if you choose to send pictures or anything else for the newsletter, please send a copy to Debbie Barger as well. Her email is debbiebarger.db@gmail.com.