

BLAST OFF

CHICKEN LITTER

Chicken crap is a major pollutant in the Chesapeake Bay Area, but Virginia Tech researcher Foster Agblevor turned that problem into a solution with a portable pyrolysis machine that turns chicken mess into reusable bio fuels. Here's a do-it-yourself guide.

— KIMBERLY WEISENSEE



STEP 1: Find a dirty chicken farm that stinks to high heaven.

STEP 2: Gather the poultry litter, which includes manure, bedding material, spilled feed and errant feathers. Don't pull an O.J. — splurge on some gloves that fit.



STEP 3: Pack the poop into the pyrolysis machine, a tightly sealed oven that keeps the material from oxygen. Heat it up to about 930 degrees.



STEP 4: After the waste has baked, collect the byproducts: A synthetic gas that can be used to power the pyrolysis machine; a liquid bio-oil that can heat chicken coops; and char, a slow-release fertilizer that replenishes the ground with carbon and other minerals.

Diving with red demons

If you're trying to woo a marine biologist or other potential aquatic mates, your shark diving stories aren't going to cut it anymore. Swimming with the Red Demon Squid of Mexico, otherwise known as the Giant Squid, is the next big adventure. According to Shark Diver, a California-based diving tour company, these future calamari get up to 5 feet long and more than 70 pounds. Not for novices, this trip requires you to be a certified diver and will put you in the water for three days. Cost: \$3,300. Visit sharkdiver.com for more information.



Dance floor mouth-to-mouth

Researchers at the University of Illinois have observed that the Bee Gees' infamous "Stayin' Alive" may actually, well, help people stay alive. A perfect CPR effort calls for 100 chest compressions per minute, while the Bee Gees' timeless classic rocks to 103 beats per minute. Just start humming along next time you find yourself pumping on someone's chest on the disco dance floor.

Researching the Obvious

Some science news headlines make us wonder what we actually need researchers to figure out.

"Time Invested in Practicing Pays Off For Young Musicians, Research Shows"

"Women Who Smoke at Increased Risk of Lung Disease"

"Binge Drinking Tied to Conditions in the College Environment"

ENDANGERED SOUP

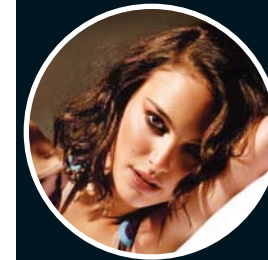
Despite scientific evidence suggesting otherwise, people have believed for hundreds of years that eating shark fin carries any number of benefits — from better health to a heightened social status to supposed aphrodisiac qualities (nature's own Viagra). A bowl of shark fin soup often sells for \$50 to \$100, with prices running as high as \$400, due in part to its luxury-level reputé and the difficulty cooking the Asian delicacy until the fin breaks into tentacle-like noodles. The tendrils are mixed with chicken or seafood stock and make for a slimy, tasteless, and nearly nutrition-less bowl of shark fin. The rest of the shark is often tossed. Endangered species activists aren't happy: The shark fin >>

trade kills up to 100 million sharks each year. Of about 400 shark species worldwide, more than 25 percent are considered endangered according to IUCN, the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

To combat poaching and black marketing for this legendary delicacy, Demian Chapman, director of shark research at the Institute of Ocean Conservation Science at Stony Brook University, recently developed a DNA test that can tell you whether a fin comes from a protected shark.

Chapman's test generates a "fingerprint" for Jaws by isolating portions of the DNA sequence that are unique to certain sharks, so scientists and law enforcement officials can test fins quickly to determine their origin and track down poachers. So next time you sit down to a steamy bowl of shark fin, cross your fingers and hope it's not an endangered species. — TOWN TRAVIS

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1. Natalie Portman



2. Gene Simmons



3. Bill Nye



4. Padma Lakshmi



5. Michael Jordan

- a. Education, CUNY
- b. Cultural Geography, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
- c. Psychology, Harvard University
- d. Mechanical Engineering, Cornell University
- e. Theater Arts, Clark University

Answer key: 1, c, 2, a, 3, d, 4, e, 5, b

Got the right dimples on your balls?

Throwing all your force into each stroke and feel like it's just not going the distance? The problem might be the dimples on your balls. Your golf balls. Researchers at Arizona State University and the University of Maryland have used a supercomputer to model the air flow around soaring golf balls, and are now looking to modify the dimple structure to lessen drag and improve your drive.

