

The world's first dinosaur choir; Fat Bear voting is open; a strong pong sparks an emergency; and a very, very good Staffy.

Hello and welcome to Squiz Kids Today ... your fresh take on what's happening in the world around you.

I'm Christie Kijurina

It's Wednesday, September 24 -

In Squiz Kids Today ... The world's first dinosaur choir; Fat Bear voting is open; a strong pong sparks an emergency; and a very, very good Staffy.

THE LOWDOWN

Voting is now officially open for what is becoming one of the most popular online contests in the world ... Fat Bear Week!

Each year since 2014, millions of people from over 100 countries have logged on to vote for the bear they think has done the best job piling on the pounds before winter hibernation. The competition takes place in Katmai National Park in Alaska, where some of the biggest brown bears on Earth spend their summer gobbling sockeye salmon at Brooks River. And thanks to a record salmon run this year, the contestants are chunkier than ever.

Of the more than 200 bears that live around the Brooks River Falls, there are 12 in the running. Fan favourite Grazer — a two-time champion — is back and her cub, “128 Junior,” just won Fat Bear Junior and is now stepping up to the big leagues. There's also “Flotato,” known for stomping dances, “Cruise Ship,” so massive she looks like one, and my pick, Bear 99, a not-quite-teenager making their Fat Bear debut.

The contest works like the footy playoffs... bears face off in daily match-ups, and the one with the most votes advances to the next round. The ultimate Fat Bear Week champion will be crowned on September 30.

And as we cheer on the next generation of furry heavyweights, fans are also remembering Otis — the four-time champ who hasn't been seen for two summers, and whose crown may now pass to the likes of Grazer or her cub.

I'll pop a link in the episode notes so you can vote too.

SPIN THE GLOBE

Each day we give the world globe a spin and find a news story from wherever it stops, and today we've landed in Lancashire, in the north of England — where a strange smell in the air sparked a full-blown emergency callout. Locals thought there was a gas leak ... but the culprit turned out to be something far fruitier.

The mystery smell was durian — a spiky fruit from Southeast Asia that's famous for its sweet, custardy taste ... and its *very* strong pong. So stinky, in fact, that it's banned on public transport in countries like Singapore. People say it smells like socks, onions, or even sewage.

Gas engineers rushed to the scene, checked neighbouring shops, and even brought in police — only to discover that the “leak” was really just a fresh delivery of durian on display in a local fruit shop. Once the source was revealed, everyone burst out laughing.

Durian lovers say it's worth braving the smell for its creamy flavour ... proving once again that one person's stink is another person's snack.

WEIRD SCIENCE

[Dinosaur Sound]

And what you're hearing there is the first instrument in what could become the world's very first dinosaur choir.

It's the call of a *Corythosaurus* (*Coreetho-saurus*) — a duck-billed dinosaur that lived about 75 million years ago in what is now Alberta, Canada. Scientists believe its giant head crest and twisty nasal passages acted like a built-in trumpet, helping the dinos resonate deep, honking sounds to communicate.

Now, artist Courtney Brown has teamed up with palaeontologists to recreate those sounds using CT scans, 3D-printed skulls, and bioacoustic modelling. The result? A giant musical instrument that mimics the *Corythosaurus* call — weird, wonderful ... and a little bit spooky. I've stuck a video explaining how it all works in the episode notes.

And the Corythosaurus is just the start. The plan is to add more duck-billed dinos — like Para-saurollo-phus and Edmonto-saurus — until there's a full dinosaur choir.

So don't be surprised if one day you find yourself listening to a prehistoric symphony, 75 million years in the making.

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BELIEVE IT OR NOT

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How well-trained is your dog? Maybe not as well as this one...

In England, a blue Staffordshire bull terrier was home alone when a fire broke out, filling the house with smoke. A police officer kicked open the door to find a blue Staffordshire bull terrier darting around. At first, the dog bolted deeper into the house when the officer tried to coax him out. But then, in an incredible twist, the dog led the officer straight to his leash hanging on a hook by the back door.

Bodycam footage (the link is in the episode notes) shows the officer clipping it on, before the two of them made a smoky dash to safety. The officer was coughing from the smoke, but the dog trotted calmly beside him, as if saying, "I can't go outside without my lead."

The video has gone viral, with people online praising the Staffy's obedience. He's a very, very good boy indeed.

SCHOOL HOL CONTENT + SPOTLIGHT

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Feeling like you're climbing a hill made of jelly? That's the tell-tale sign it's the end of term. Kids, parents, teachers — we're all counting down the days. Unless, of course, you're in Queensland, Victoria or the NT ... in which case, you're already on holidays and probably doing cartwheels.

This is our last week of daily news for the term — but don't go anywhere. We've lined up loads of fun school holiday content for you to enjoy through our website or your favourite podcast app.

You'll get two brand-new episodes of *Squiz Kids Spotlight* — I nabbed an interview with Australia's very first astronaut, Katherine Bennell-Pegg. How amazing is that?

And Bryce will be sitting down with political writer Annabel Crabb to chat about her new book *There's A Prawn In Parliament House...* (yep. There actually is one) Plus, we've got brainteasers to keep your brains buzzing, a School Holiday Movie Guide, Squiz Kids Science Shorts, and not one but two Bumper School Holiday Quizzes.

It all kicks off next week and runs right through the holidays.

And don't forget — if it's your birthday between September 29 and October 12, your shout-out will be waiting for you when we're back with daily news on October 13.

THE S'QUIZ

This is the part of the podcast where you get to test how well you've been listening ...

1. How many bears are facing off for the title of fattest bear this year?
2. What is the name of the stinky fruit that sparked an emergency in the UK?
3. What did one very well-trained dog need to get before he evacuated his burning house?

SHOUT OUTS

It's Wednesday, September 24 ... On this day wayyy back in 1952, the very first Kentucky Fried Chicken store opened in Salt Lake City, Utah, USA. And yes, there really was a Colonel Sanders — the man in the white suit who came up with that famous recipe of 11 secret herbs and spices.

It's also a special day for these Squiz Kids, celebrating a birthday today...

Giimaa from Wentworth Point, Mitchell from Forest Lake, Noah from Fernvale, Jade from Naremburn, Marley from Brisbane, Olivia from Lindfield, Toddy from Mosman, Oliver from Mosman, Oliver from Kurri Kurri, Rubina from Plumpton and Tyler from Five Dock.

And belated shoutouts go to... Alianna from Chester Hill, Caitlin from Beaconsfield, Karl from Yeppoon and Pratik from Brisbane.

(EB note QLD & Vic on hols)

Classroom shoutouts go to... Rooms 12 and 13 with Mrs Bell and Miss L at Edwardstown Primary School, Diamond Class with Ms Austin at Bullarah Public school, Buninje Class with Ms Wilkinson at Tabulam Public School and a special shoutout to all of the students in Mrs Mayes class at Wycliffe Hope School in the Blue Mountains - they have just completed the Squiz Kids Media Literacy program, Newshounds and have loved it! I reckon they're all now super-sleuths at spotting fake news!

The S'Quiz Answers:

1. 12
2. Durian
3. His lead.

Don't forget .. if you've got a birthday coming up and you want a shout out - or, if you're after a classroom shout out- drop us a line at squizkids@thesquiz.com.au or fill out the form on our website.

Well - that's all we have time for. Thanks for listening to Squiz Kids Today - We'll be back again tomorrow

In the meantime ... get out there and have a most excellent day ... over and out.