

Scientific & Digital Briefs

By Shopper Editor Dave Bunting

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300,000-year-old human-knapped flint flakes

From 300,000 to 2,500 years ago, when European prehistoric people re-sharpened, “re-knapped” flint cutting tools, they dropped tiny chips of flint—which today yield evidence of how life was lived by early humans.

Now, a multidisciplinary team led by the University of Tübingen and the Senckenberg Center for Human Evolution and Paleoenvironment (SHEP) in Tübingen has analyzed this very old material for the information it can provide. The study has been published in *Scientific Reports*.

The small flint flakes were discovered at the Lower Paleolithic site of Schöningen, Lower Saxony. The 57 small stone chips and three bone implements for re-sharpening [stone tools](#) were discovered around the skeleton of a Eurasian straight-tusked elephant that had died on the shore of a lake about 300,000 years ago.

Being Bullied Might Affect You For Years

Typically, in American schools, bullying is like the dark cousin to prom, student elections, or football practice: Maybe you weren’t involved, but you knew that among your classmates, someone was being bullied, and someone was being the bully.

Everyone suffers hurts, injuries, and abuses in life. Almost everyone leaves behind the anger, loss, or depression from such harms, forgotten, and moves forward toward ongoing life.

But research shows that, for some, childhood bullying is corrosive to a few children’s mental health and well-being, with consequences ranging from trouble sleeping and skipping school to psychiatric problems, such as the familiar repetitive “pity pot”, depression or psychosis, self-harm, even suicide.



34.5% decline in Northwest cherry crop

A small statewide cherry crop had been predicted ever since snow and cold interfered with the April blooming season, and final harvest numbers show just how small it was.

Northwest cherry growers harvested 13,277,332 boxes this year, a 34.5% decline from the harvest of 20.3 million 20-pound boxes in 2021, according to data released Dec. 14 during a meeting of the Washington State Fruit Commission.

Typically, harvests average about 20 million boxes, although annual crops have been declining from 2017’s record-setting 26.43 million-box harvest, said B.J. Thurlby, Northwest Cherry Growers president.



Huge Berlin aquarium bursts, unleashing flood

An 8-stories tall vertical aquarium in Berlin burst, spilling debris, water and hundreds of tropical fish out of the AquaDom tourist attraction in the heart of the German capital early Friday.

Police said parts of the building, which also contains a hotel, cafes, and a chocolate store, were damaged as 264,000 gallons of water poured from the aquarium shortly before 6 a.m. local time. Berlin’s fire service said two people were slightly injured.

Washingtonians leaving state

Through much of the 2010s, Washington was among the top states for drawing newcomers from other parts of the nation. Those days seem to be over.

Data released last week by the U.S. Census Bureau shows liberal Washington now has more people leaving than moving here. From July 1, 2021, to July 1, 2022, Washington had a net loss of about 3,600 people to other states.

Technically, we also lost last year, but the estimated net loss of 29 people was negligible. And that was also during the height of the pandemic, and I had wondered if the numbers would bounce back in 2022.

They didn’t. They dropped even more, representing a significant demographic shift from the 2010s.

The fastest-growing state, for the first time since 1957, was Governor Ron DeSantis’ Florida at 1.9% increase. Conservative Idaho was second, at 1.8%.

Professor “terrified” by student’s exams authored by artificial intelligence

Welcome to the new age of academic dishonesty.

A college professor in South Carolina is sounding the alarm after catching a student using ChatGPT — [a new artificial intelligence chat bot](#) that can quickly digest and spit out written information about a vast array of subjects — to write an essay for his philosophy class.

The weeks-old technology, released by OpenAI and [readily available to the public](#), comes as yet another blow to higher learning, already [plagued by rampant cheating](#).

“Academia did not see this coming. So, we’re sort of blindsided by it,” Furman University assistant philosophy professor Darren Hick told The Post. “As soon as I reported this on Facebook, my teacher friends said, ‘Yeah, I caught one too.’”

Hick had instructed his class to write at home a 500-word essay on [the 18th-century philosopher David Hume](#).

Despite having a background in the ethics of copyright law, Hick said proving that the paper was concocted by ChatGPT was nearly impossible.

Dave Bunting, Dec. 27, 2022

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