



Tuesday, November 03, 2009

## Chicken Litter: The Aerial Hunt for Poultry Manure

Ocean City, Md. - Retired Marine officer Rick Dove boarded the four-seat Cessna armed with cameras, binoculars and global positioning devices for his latest mission: chicken farmers. Or, more precisely, aerial reconnaissance of poultry droppings. "Oh, man, that looks like a hot site," Mr. Dove said as the plane soared 1,000 feet over farms near the Chesapeake Bay. Peering through binoculars, he said, "That pile is at least two stories high." He whipped out his camera and started snapping pictures. Mr. Dove, 70 years old, suspected the brown mound was chicken manure -- a potential pollutant of the Chesapeake Bay, the huge estuary nestled between the shores of Maryland and Virginia. Mr. Dove, a former military judge whose subsequent fishing business he believes was ruined by pollution, is among the activists who, along with federal regulators, are ratcheting up pressure on poultry farmers to clean up their litter. Livestock and poultry operations generate about 500 million tons of manure each year, or about three times the amount of human waste in the U.S., according to the Environmental Protection Agency. Much of that waste goes untreated and sometimes can make its way into public waterways. Among other contaminants, manure contains nitrogen and phosphorus that in large quantities can cause algae blooms -- green, gooey splotches on the water surface that can deplete the water's oxygen, killing fish and other organisms. And in some cases, the runoff, which can contain E. coli and other bacteria, can threaten human health. But the pressure on the poultry and livestock industries comes amid economic hardship. Environmental activists and some lawmakers waged previous battles over farm manure from hog farms in North Carolina and Iowa. Those conflicts at times came at a hefty cost to industry. Last year, new EPA rules shifted attention to poultry farmers, who already are struggling with low prices and weak demand in the U.S. and overseas. Around the Chesapeake area, where poultry farming is big business, chicken farmers think they have been unfairly singled out. "The EPA seems to think that poultry farmers are Public Enemy No. 1," says Bill Satterfield, executive director of the Delmarva Poultry Industry Inc., which represents the area's poultry industry. Citing EPA data, he notes that bay pollution also comes from numerous nonfarm



sources linked to the area's population growth, including human sewage and lawn fertilizer. Even animals such as deer and Canada geese can contaminate water, Mr. Satterfield says. But, he adds, "It appears you're guilty until you prove yourself innocent." ([Full Article Here.](#))

**Winter wear: mittens, hat, gloves, sled ... sled?**

When you think about it, sledding is only half fun. Flying down the hill is a blast; lugging the Flexible Flyer back up the hill is, well, a drag. Is there any way, outside of hiring a sled-puller, to

just double the fun part? **Solved!** Why not just leave the old sled in the garage and stick a sled right to your bottom? Don't laugh, that's the idea behind SnowShorts (\$35 at [Orvis.com](http://Orvis.com)), an ingenious product that fits over your snowsuit (it comes in kids and grown-up sizes) and offers a foam-padded PVC seat with six runners that steer just like a sled. You zip down the hill on your caboose, and then run back up the hill without pulling a heavy sled. Just be careful, bumrushing (literally) a tree with this thing on will leave a mark.

### **Mole Rats may hold key to human longevity**

They live in underground colonies with a queen, her harem of favorite males, soldiers to defend the tunnel system and workers to keep excavating in search of food. But despite having the social structure of an ants' nest or beehive, naked mole rats are mammals about the size of a mouse. And among their many peculiarities are features that could, if understood, be of great



relevance to human health and longevity. Their life span is of extraordinary length for a rodent. Mice live a couple of years but mole rats can reach the venerable age of 28. The long life is probably a consequence of their protected existence. Mice have a short life span because they have many predators. Better to breed fast and young than prepare for an old age none will ever live to see. Gray squirrels, on the other hand, have fewer enemies and can live for more than 20 years. The naked mole rat lives an even more protected lifestyle than do squirrels. The queens never come to the surface. Even the workers are exposed only when they need to shovel dirt to the earth's surface. A colony's principal danger is other mole rats who may break into the tunnel system, testing the soldier caste's defenses. Another risk to life is a kind of civil war that breaks out when a queen dies. Other females, intimidated into staying barren while the queen lived, regain their fertility and fight until one emerges victorious. But casualties are generally low, and presumably because of this relative safety, mole rats have evolved the ability to live more than 10 times longer than mice. Mice are very prone to cancer; in some strains, 90 percent of them die of tumors. People have stronger defenses against cancer, as is necessary for a long-lived animal: the disease accounts for 23 percent of human mortality. But the mole rat has taken its anticancer defenses even further: it seems not to get the disease at all. "These animals have never been observed to develop any spontaneous neoplasms," Vera Gorbunova and colleagues said in an article in the current Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences. Dr. Gorbunova, who works at the University of Rochester, has taken a first step toward understanding the genetic basis of the mole rat's surprising immunity to cancer. She and her colleagues have found that the rats' cells have a double system for inhibiting irregular proliferation, compared with the single system in human cells. Normal human cells grown in a lab dish show behavior known as contact inhibition. Once the cells come in contact with one another, they form a single layer and stop

dividing. Cancer cells, however, have thrown off that restraint and keep proliferating, forming one layer on top of another. ([Full Article Here.](#))



### **Consider the Pothole**

New York, New York - On Sunday morning, passersby paused to watch a man sitting in the middle of Greenwich Street eating spaghetti and meatballs out of a pothole. No, he was not a homeless man enjoying a castaway doggie bag from Gaetana's. He was modeling for My Potholes: a photo project conceived by Montreal-based artists Davide Luciano and Claudia Ficca that shows people using potholes for daily activities as if they are a valuable part of the neighborhood rather than a roadway menace. The couple had the idea for the series

after they hit a pothole so large it caused costly damage to their car. At first they were angry, and naturally so, "but then we thought, wouldn't it be funny if we saw a woman washing clothes in a pothole?" says Luciano. Besides challenging people to see the world differently, "we want to make people laugh," says Ficca. Other scenes have included a man crushing grapes to make wine, a lady receiving a pedicure and a couple baptizing their child. And they have at least 30 more ideas according to Luciano, whose first passion is film but has turned increasingly to photography to tell his stories. "For one thing, it's cheaper," he laughs. In Montreal, potholes are a serious problem and subject of much-heated debated. For whatever reason, the cold weather or, speculates Ficca, political corruption, the prevalence of the obstructions have made their work easy so far. But this was the first time they have photographed outside of Montreal and they were surprised how difficult it was to find a decent pothole in New York. A testament to Giuliani's scrubbing? Perhaps, but also, "it's not really pothole season," sighs Ficca. The first good one they found was in Little Italy, a more appropriate setting for the spaghetti scene, but they decided that Mulberry Street was too narrow and cars would not have been able to pass. Their guerrilla-style of shooting typically takes less than five minutes and so far they haven't had any trouble with the law. Today they arrived with a bag full of spaghetti "probably too much," laugh Ficca, and meatballs that they had made the night before. They quickly arranged the pasta in the pothole and their model, Luciano's brother, pulled up a seat. They alternately gave instructions and snapped photos. A curious cab driver became an impromptu part of the scene and seemed more than happy to participate, obeying Luciano's gestures. Ficca nervously looked over her shoulder as a police car pulled up to the intersection, but after pausing for a minute to absorb the scene, he moved on. "We won't be going to jail today at least," she said happily. The problem of potholes, it seems, is universal and their work is gaining international appreciation: one man emailed from Rio de Janeiro inviting them to his neighborhood and a magazine in China is featuring a full-page spread. "Everyone has a pothole," says Ficca, profoundly. Website with more photos [here](#).

#### **Space hotel says it's on schedule to open in 2012**

BARCELONA, Spain - A company behind plans to open the first hotel in space says it is on target to accept its first paying guests in 2012 despite critics questioning the investment and time frame for the multi-billion dollar project. The Barcelona-based architects of The Galactic Suite Space Resort say it will cost \$4.4 million for a three-night stay at the hotel, with this price including an eight-week training course on a tropical island. During



their stay, guests would see the sun rise 15 times a day and travel around the world every 80 minutes. They would wear Velcro suits so they can crawl around their pod rooms by sticking themselves to the walls like Spiderman. Galactic Suite Ltd's CEO Xavier Claramunt, a former aerospace engineer, said the project will put his company at the forefront of an infant industry with a huge future ahead of it, and forecast space travel will become common in the future. "It's very normal to think that your children, possibly within 15 years, could spend a weekend in space," he told Reuters Television. A nascent space tourism industry is beginning to take shape with construction underway in New Mexico of Spaceport America, the world's first facility built specifically for space-bound commercial customers and fee-paying passengers. British tycoon Richard Branson's space tours firm, Virgin Galactic, will use the facility to propel tourists into suborbital space at a cost of \$200,000 a ride. Galactic Suite Ltd, set up in 2007, hopes to start its project with a single pod in orbit 280 miles above the earth, with the capacity to hold four guests and two astronaut-pilots. It will take a day and a half to reach the pod — which Claramunt compared to a mountain retreat, with no staff to greet the traveler. "When the passengers arrive in the rocket, they will join it for three days, rocket and capsule. With this we create in the tourist a

confidence that he hasn't been abandoned. After three days the passenger returns to the transport rocket and returns to earth," he said. More than 200 people have expressed an interest in traveling to the space hotel and at least 43 people have already reserved. The numbers are similar for Virgin Galactic with 300 people already paid or signed up for the trip but unlike Branson, Galactic Suite say they will use Russian rockets to transport their guests into space from a spaceport to be build on an island in the Caribbean. But critics have questioned the project, saying the time frame is unreasonable and also where the money is coming from to finance the project. Claramunt said an anonymous billionaire space enthusiast has granted \$3 billion to finance the project.

#### **"Hottest Bachelor" arrested after Halloween prank**



Naples, Florida - A Halloween prank ended with a popular Naples business man in jail. Deputies say they have surveillance video of the man pulling fire alarms at the Sway Lounge in Naples on Halloween night. Ingmar Sprude, who was dressed as Pamela Anderson, was recently the cover model for Gulfshore Life magazine's hottest bachelors of 2009 issue. The 28-year-old calls himself fun, spontaneous and caring. But the Collier County Sheriff's Office is calling him a felon. We spoke with Sprude Monday night, but he declined to comment. According to the sheriff's office reports, fire crews responded after this alarm was pulled and the people inside the club had to evacuate. "Sway is known for Halloween and I think people came with the expectation that something special was going to happen. That was not what they were expecting to happen," said Jason Blend of Sway Lounge. Investigators watched the surveillance video

and, according to reports, saw a white male wearing a red bathing suit with swim shorts, a blonde wig and flip flops - a costume meant to look like Pamela Anderson from the popular TV show Baywatch. And while clubgoers were all dressed up in costumes that night, investigators claim Sprude was the one on the surveillance video. "There were quite a few men wearing wigs. I don't know how anyone would interpret what Pamela Anderson looks like between her hair and her boobs. There were a lot of guys dressed as women," said Blend. Sprude is now out on bond. While he did not talk to us on camera, over the phone he said that he has already hired an attorney.

**Central Talent Booking**