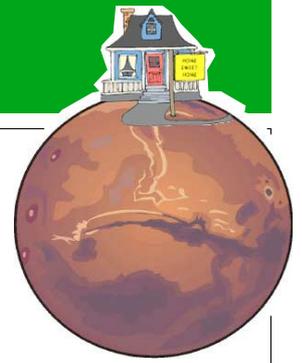




The World Around Us



"Foreign Correspondent"
Michael Ludwig reports on some interesting goings on in the natural world.

A Place Called Home

On July 20, 1969, astronaut Neil Armstrong became the first human to walk on the Moon. Now it seems likely that tourists with enough money will be able to make lunar trips and explore where he was. Even more adventurous space travellers want to go even farther. They are setting their sights on landing on Mars. However they don't just want to visit as tourists they want to move there. Incredibly the Foundation *Mars One* is trying to establish a permanent human settlement on the Red Planet. They plan on sending unmanned robotic cargo ships to make preparations on the planet before sending a few selected humans to live and work there. It sounds very exciting but it has a major downside: there does not appear to be the resources on Mars to power a spaceship off the planet and home on the return trip to Earth. For those taking the outbound trip there isn't a round trip ticket.

Join Bioblitz 2014

Now is the time to think about taking part in Bioblitz 2014, organized by the National Biodiversity Data Centre. It is happening on 24th and 25th May 2014 at a number of sites around the country. These sites will compete to record the most species of wildlife seen over a 24-hour period. There will also be a programme of activities at each site running in conjunction with BioBlitz. For anyone interested in wildlife or a fun experience, attend and join the recording activity. For details visit www.biodiversityireland.ie.



Future Winter Olympics

A joint study between Canada and Austria has revealed that due to climate change and rising temperatures on Earth, only six of the 19 countries that have hosted the Winter Olympics, would still be cold enough to provide the ice and snow needed to host the games by the middle of this century.



Standing in the Classroom

A school in Melbourne, Australia, is offering the world's first standing classroom. Fitted with height-adjustable desks, the classroom is part of an experiment by researchers in the Baker IDI Heart and Diabetes Institute in Australia. They are monitoring the children participating in the experiment to see if it improves their health, fitness, memory and learning. It is believed that long hours of sitting each day has a negative effect on our health and by encouraging children to stand for parts of the day, will increase muscle activity, increased blood flow and help to reduce the onset of obesity and diabetes in children.



Printing with Water?

Often we only print something to see how it looks on a page or to show it to someone and then the page is put in the recycling bin. This wastes a lot of paper and ink. To stop this, scientists in the University of China have come up with a solution. Instead of using ink in printers they have come up with a way to use water. It might seem impossible to have transparent ink but the secret is in the paper they developed for the printer. It is coated with a dye that reacts to water, the paper will display text or an image in less than a second once it has been printed with the water ink. As the paper dries the print disappears, leaving a reusable sheet of paper. Depending on the temperature and rate of evaporation, the paper goes blank in about 22 hours. Not only could this save paper but it could reduce the amount of ink used too. As yet they have managed to create four colours: blue, magenta, gold and purple but can only print one colour at a time. It seems there is some research needed before we can refill our printer cartridges with water so don't go rushing to the kitchen tap just yet!

