

**W**ell, here we are once again! Good morning or evening, dear FANs! Here at Artemus Central, we've been busily amassing our gardening supplies, planning our raised beds, and trying to figure out just how we're going to grow that prized crop of beefsteak tomatoes once Mother Nature gives us the green light. It goes without saying that Mother Nature herself has been throwing us a series of curveballs over the past couple of weeks. For instance, we were outside last Saturday in T-shirts and no coats, preparing flower beds in anticipation of Spring-like weather. The very next day, there was 2" of that white fluffy stuff back on the ground...SIGH.

Still, we're hopeful and we're going to [at least] pretend that Spring is right around the corner! How 'bout you? What're you planning for Spring? Drop us a note and let us know. And so with that little ditty, let's get moving to the task at hand - the fourth issue of ACG's "FANs Weekly Summary"!

## HE CATCHES 'EM...EVEN IN SOUTH AMERICA!

Artemus Founder, Bob Wallace, and his wife, Mary Margaret are enjoying a 30+ day (16 days up and 16 back) cruise around the southern tip of South America. Bob was again asked by Viking cruises to be a guest speaker aboard the cruise

ship, but somewhere along the way, Bob found time in Patagonia to do one of his beloved



pastimes: fish! Yep, he caught a beauty, too!! Here's his guide posing with Bob's catch.

## ROBOT BARTENDERS AT THE OLYMPICS

contributed by FAN, Bill Amshey

Weary media workers covering the Winter Games can order a drink from the robot and throw one back in the Bar Area off the main dining hall, part of the COVID bubble journalists will be confined to during the Olympics which start on February 4.

The agile arm can mix more than a dozen types of cocktails, both alcoholic and non-alcoholic, and it does it all in Olympic speed. It takes the robot just 70 to 90 seconds to measure, shake, and serve the perfect beverage. Human bartenders are also on duty to lend a hand if that antiquated human touch is ever needed. Take a look at one in action:



The Beijing Olympics organizers' decision to automate much of the cafeteria in the Games' Main Media Center was a savvy one. Thousands of writers, photographers and broadcasters will pass through the cafeteria over the next two weeks, and the robots are the perfect centerpiece for a soft-focus Olympics story. (Like, you know, this one.)

# FACEBOOK AND GMAIL USERS WARNED NEVER TO USE THESE PASSWORDS

contributed by FAN, Steve Page

**A new study shows that many people use easily-hackable passwords. C'mon, FANs...please tell us that "many people" doesn't include you!**

Experts have warned against using certain common passwords on apps as they increase the chances of being hacked, a new report found.

The study conducted by card payments company Dojo found that many people tend to recycle similar passwords. The study looked at 100,000 breached passwords from the UK's National Cyber Security Center and then grouped them into more



than 30 categories, from animals to star signs.

The research yielded some interesting commonalities: Most people tend to use variations of the same password, with a slightly different number or character.

People also tend to gravitate toward certain password categories — at the top of the list are pet names and terms of endearment such as "baby," "love" and "angel."

"By seeing which category had the most breached passwords, the study can reveal the password subjects you should avoid as a whole to stay secure online," the study wrote. "By seeing which category had the most

breached passwords, the study can reveal the password subjects you should avoid as a whole to stay secure online," the study wrote.

The study also specifically advised users to stay away from passwords that feature things such as sports, car makes, food, colors, cities, and countries, among others. Chrome after hackers target remote workers According to the NCSC, other popular passwords to stay away from are those that feature a sequence of numbers such as "123456" (23.2 million users), "123456789" (7.7 million users) and "1111111" (3.1 million users).

It is well documented that cybercrime is on the rise, especially as most payment options are expected to be completely digital in the future.

Furthermore, cybercrime has soared by 600% since the COVID pandemic, while 80% of UK organizations experienced at least one successful cyberattack in 2019.

However, by improving your security, you can significantly lower your risk of getting attacked by threat actors.

While staying away from the most hacked keywords is a start, you can take security measures a step further by opting for passwords generated by tools like 1Password.

You can also employ 3D Secure authentication for online credit and debit card transactions.



# WHAT IS CAUSING HAVANA SYNDROME, THE MYSTERIOUS ILLNESS THAT HAS STRUCK HUNDREDS OF US DIPLOMATS?

contributed by FAN, Steve Jones

In December 2021, a former FBI agent previously posted to Guangzhou in China began legal proceedings against the US government. The agent claimed the US Secretary of State and the State department hadn't taken the situation seriously enough when, a few years earlier in Guangzhou, the agent and his family had begun experiencing sudden headaches, dizziness, nosebleeds, memory loss and nausea.

It was just the latest development in a saga that first began to unfold in 2016 when dozens of US agents and staff based at the US embassy in Cuba began describing a similar range of neurological symptoms, in many cases accompanied by an eerie or ear-splitting sound and facial pain.

Depending on who you ask, so-called 'Havana syndrome' – which by now has reportedly affected more than 200 US staff based not only in Cuba and China, but also Germany, Austria, Russia and Serbia (there was also a recent suspected case in Washington) – is caused by a malicious sonic or microwave-based weapon developed by the Russians, or it is a textbook instance of mass psychogenic illness. The Russians deny having or using an acoustic weapon that can target the brain. However, in 2020, the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine published a detailed scientific report in which they concluded "many of the distinctive and acute signs, symptoms, and observations" described by US employees are "consistent with the effects of directed, pulsed radio frequency energy". And in November 2021, the FBI finally admitted to the media that it has issued a formal warning to its staff about what it calls "Anomalous Health Incidents".



There are reasons for being sceptical about the weapon-based theory, though. Security experts have commented that it's unlikely Russia would have been able to develop some as-yet-unidentified technology without the West finding out about it. Neurological experts have pointed out that it is implausible that a sonic device could selectively target the brain. Meanwhile, recordings reportedly taken of the intense sounds heard in Cuba (and blamed for the symptoms) have been identified as most likely being the mating call of a Caribbean cricket by researchers at the University of California, Berkley. And in 2018, a group of researchers at the University of Pennsylvania reported that the results of brain scans they'd performed on 21 former US Cuba-based staff who'd experienced the neurological symptoms showed no significant abnormalities.

When physical symptoms are experienced in the absence of any identifiable physical cause, such as a virus – and especially when the symptoms show signs of contagiousness, first appearing in one person and then appearing in others with whom they are in close contact – then one plausible explanation is mass psychogenic illness. This means the ultimate cause of the illness is people's beliefs, which then 'infect' others, potentially leading to a mass outbreak. Some experts argue controversially that this is the most likely cause of Havana Syndrome.

Mass psychogenic illness has a few key components. The first is that a set of similar health symptoms emerges among a group of people who are in close contact; the second is that it often occurs in a context of intense stress or anxiety; and finally, to be confirmed as psychogenic, there must be an

## Havana Syndrome (continued)

absence of any known ongoing organic cause, such as a virus, bacteria, poison or cutting-edge sonic weaponry.

Worth noting is that the initiator of a psychogenic outbreak could have a physical illness, but to meet the criteria for mass psychogenic illness, those subsequently affected must not have been exposed to the physical cause, but only to the idea of the symptoms.

At the heart of this phenomenon is the 'nocebo effect', which is the harmful reverse of the 'placebo effect' – in this case, the mere belief that something is harmful can provoke real unpleasant symptoms, just as positive beliefs about a placebo pill can induce real medical benefits. That word 'real' is important. Just because the causes of a syndrome are psychological does not mean the suffering and symptoms are not real.

There are countless confirmed cases of mass psychogenic illness in the medical literature. Here is just one: imagine being at school and suddenly a rising number of your classmates report sensing a strange smell and coming down with intense nausea. As fears grow, you too begin to feel discomfort in your stomach and before you know it, you too are sick.

It  
is



hard to believe it is all in the mind and that there is not some kind of a chemical spill or gas leak. Yet this is exactly what happened at a South Yorkshire school in 2006 when more than 30 pupils and a teaching assistant were suddenly taken ill. No leak was ever found and of those pupils rushed to hospital, all were discharged within a few hours.

It is not currently possible to know for sure whether Havana Syndrome is an instance of mass psychogenic illness, but it does fit some or all of the criteria. Many of the affected agents have been operating in stressful, dangerous environments. They have been in close contact with each other, exposed to the idea of the symptoms and the dread that they too might be affected. In the absence of any apparent physical explanation, and with the sonic weapon being purely theoretical and unproven at this point, then a psychological cause seems plausible.

# NOBODY BOUGHT ANYTHING...SO, WE THOUGHT WE'D TRY SOMETHING ELSE!

## THE COOLEST URBAN DESIGN IDEAS FROM ALL OVER THE WORLD

Big cities tend to be quite gray. Skyscrapers, pavements, cars – it's all very monotonous and uninspiring. Thankfully, many urban designers and creative people out there have been working hard to come up with clever solutions to defy this stereotype. Here are some of the best urban design ideas that connect people to their cities. Here's the first of many...and more to come!



### THIS ROTATING PUBLIC BENCH ALWAYS HAS A DRY SIDE.

There's nothing worse than trying to find a dry bench after a rain shower. This is why these rotating benches are so clever. Using a handle, you can rotate the wooden paneling on the seat, ensuring you always have a dry surface to sit on.

Designed by South Korean designer, Sung Woo Park.

## THIS WEEK IN THE ARTEMUS WEBSITE'S ARTEMUS SPOTLIGHTS



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[Free Cybersecurity Tools and Services List Published by CISA](#)



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