



# The World Around Us



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

## Beyond Endurance - Walking to the South Pole

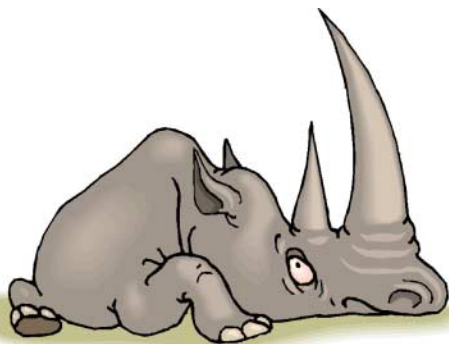
Over the winter, while we were all toasting ourselves by the fire or tucked up in warm beds, four people were slowly making their way across Antarctica, heading for the South Pole. On 8th January 2008, Pat Falvey, Clare O'Leary, Shaun Menzies and Jonathon Bradshaw were the first Irish Team to walk to the South Pole. It was a huge challenge to walk over 1100km pulling a 150 kg sledge with temperatures dipping to  $-28^{\circ}$  C along the way. A record was also achieved by Clare O'Leary who became the first Irish woman to have reached the South Pole. Her constant companion on her journey, Frederick T. Bear (Freddy for short) was the first Irish bear to complete the journey!



Photo courtesy www.patfalvey.com

## All that Glitters is Not Gold!

Dublin Zoo are trying to breed two female rhinos - Ashanti and Zanta. To do this they need to keep a check on their hormone levels and the easiest way is to monitor their faecal samples (in other words their poo!). But how can they tell who's poo is who's when both rhinos are kept together? The keepers came up with a sparkling idea. They added different coloured glitter to each rhino's feed - silver in one and blue in the other - and now it's easy to tell the poos apart. Keepers are delighted with the results and are hopeful that one of the rhinos might be expecting a baby!



## 'Man' on Mars?

Recently sightings on Mars have caused a bit of a stir. A blurry photograph from NASA's Mars Rover, *Spirit*, which has been sending back images of the planet's surface for the last four years, shows the shape of a human figure! However, a scientist from NASA has confirmed that it is just a 2-inch high piece of rock which has been shaped by the wind!

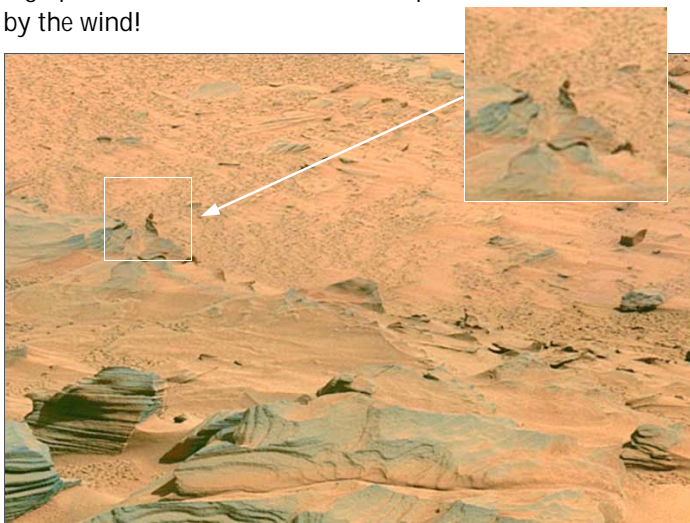
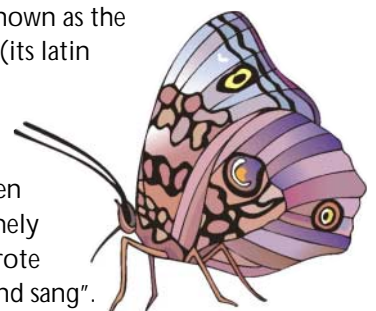


Photo courtesy of NASA

## Granny's Mexican Owl Butterfly

If Margery Minerva Blythe Kitzmiller of Ohio, USA, was alive today, she would have been very proud of her five grandchildren. Between them they paid US\$40,800 to have a butterfly named after her. The University of Florida discovered that a mis-identified owl butterfly in their collection was actually a new species. In order to raise money to continue their research into these Mexican butterflies, they had an online auction for the naming rights. The butterfly is now known as the Minerva owl butterfly (its latin name is *Opsiphanes blythekitzmillerae*) in memory of a woman whom her grandchildren described as "an extremely creative person who wrote poetry, played piano and sang".



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