

IN THE MIDDLE: Cockroaches vs. Antarctica: What's your vote? By Grant Wyness

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One of the great things about attending Barker Middle School is the focus on STEM: Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. In my opinion, there are few things more interesting than science and scientific discoveries.

Two of the most fascinating scientific discoveries I've heard about recently have to do with cockroaches and Antarctica.



Did you know that most cockroaches are about five times stronger than the average human being? Scientists have discovered that cockroaches can be considered "superheroes" because of the abilities they have. Imagine this: A single cockroach can bite on something with a force 50 times that of its own body

weight! Scientists have been able to test this by strapping ten American cockroaches on their backs in a capsule with a sensor to test the strength of their mandibles. Two of the ten cockroaches were actually disqualified from the testing because they bit so hard they broke the sensor.

Anyway, for a less gross subject, let's move on to another discovery.

Scientists have recently found that Antarctica is still gaining ice, even though the Earth is slowly warming.

In fact, it has been found that Antarctica is actually gaining ice faster than global warming is melting ice in other places.

Scientists say more snow is falling there as an effect of global warming. So, you are probably wondering: Why is more snow falling there, when it is still super cold? Well, the answer is that global warming causes an increased amount of moisture, which is a product of warmer temperatures. Some parts of Antarctica are melting, however the continent is growing in size overall because more ice is forming from the effects of snow on the eastern and western sides. Scientists have discovered that the west side is actually the most susceptible to warming, yet it is still gaining ice.

Another interesting thing is that the Antarctic has a special ozone layer over it, known as a "hole." This depleting ozone hole over Antarctica forms a change in wind dynamics, which is strengthening the polar winds and the jet stream. But, it traps the cold air around Antarctica, which is creating a cooling "circle." However, this will not continue; it will disappear due to global warming.

Finally, although the Antarctic is growing, its opposite end of the globe is not doing so well. The Arctic is not growing in size and will continue to melt. #SaveThePolarBears.

So which discovery did you find more interesting? Superhero cockroaches or a growing Antarctica?

Please let me know by visiting the Barker website at www.EducateMC.net/barker and leaving a comment for me.

Grant Wyness is a student at Barker Middle School. In the Middle is a regular column which is produced by middle school students in the Michigan City Area Schools