

[Transcript] Global News Podcast / The Happy Pod: Saved from skin cancer

Hello, this is the Global News podcast from the BBC World Service with reports and analysis from across the world. The latest news seven days a week. BBC World Service podcasts are supported by advertising. Hi, I'm Professor Dan Angus and you're listening to The Happy Pod. Hi, I'm Dr Graham Siegs and you're listening to The Happy Pod.

A professor and a doctor no less, you heard them. Welcome to The Happy Pod from the BBC World Service.

I'm Jackie Leonard and in this edition we'll be in Australia, Germany, Canada and Colombia, where a 13 year old girl kept her three younger siblings safe for 40 days in the rainforest.

Leslie, without a doubt, was the one who kept her younger siblings alive. It was a miracle.

Also in this podcast Natasha has full control. She can alter the sails and the direction of the boat just by a sip and a puff. The girl with cerebral palsy who sailed the Atlantic

using her breath and your favourite sounds. The ripping of velcro, screech of wheels on the floor, the oofs when people get a nice hit, piercing whistles from the officials.

It makes my heart warm and pumps me up in a multitude of ways.

We begin with a story about observation, investigation and the upside of having a big internet presence. It all began when Dr Graham Siegs, a skin cancer expert, you might guess where this is heading, was watching the ABC Evening News at home in Adelaide in Australia.

Professor Daniel Angus from Queensland University of Technology was on and as interesting as his interview was, Dr Siegs was distracted by the professor's appearance.

I was most interested in the brown spot on Daniel's right cheek, reasonably large, about a centimetre in diameter and I thought that looked a bit strange and I was very suspicious that it might be a melanoma. So I googled his name and found that Daniel had many images of his face on the internet and I was able to look back over the previous few years and discovered that that spot had not always been there, at least not as large as it was now and that it had been obviously growing over a period of several years. So I wrote him an email. Daniel, this would be an odd email to get. Did you consider ignoring it? Yeah, it's a funny one. I do tend to get what I might term as fan mail occasionally, but yeah, this one, it didn't have, I mean, Graham was very careful in the way that he emailed it. He included information that for me, it absolutely checked out it's legitimate and this is someone that if nothing else is just concerned for my welfare and you know, I had consulted a couple of GPs previously about this, this suspicious spot. It's been on my face for about 10 years and they kind of waved me off, just said, look, yeah, okay, it could be something. We're not quite sure, but it was on the back of the information and the confidence I had in Graham's advice, because with his, you know, additional accreditation, I thought, look, I really definitely should get this checked out. If someone's seen this, taken the time to write an email that really sends a strong signal that they are confident that this is at least worth making another appointment and the dermatologist straight away said, yeah, Dan, this is troubling and we definitely need to buy Opsia. It did come back as all of the samples were indicative of a level zero melanoma and Sarchi melanoma. So that's when I got a referral to our public hospital and they've got an absolutely wonderful kind of plastics team there who did an absolutely amazing job of taking the whole thing off. How are you now? Look, great. Right. I mean, this is it's major surgery and you know, it's a considerable, you know, pound of flesh I've given over off my face, but I will say this one thing that most people that have heard the story now and I've seen in person are absolutely flabbergasted at how quickly it's healing. I've just got to say that they have done an absolutely amazing job. The surgical team of doing this,

it'll be a few months until it's fully healed. They're saying that, you know, most of the scar itself will be, you know, largely invisible to anyone passing. And yeah, I mean, I'm not someone who's too kind of hung up on my looks anyway, but yeah, incredibly happy with with the work they've done. Well done to the doctors and staff who looked after you. Graham, is this an occupational hazard for you? Do you find yourself involuntarily giving everybody a once over when you meet them? Quite commonly when I'm out in the public, I look at people's spaces and if they've got an obvious spot there, then I do take notice. I hone in on things. I guess that's part of my job really. And I don't always speak to people about it. If I'm highly suspicious, then I might sort of tap them on the shoulder. Often in a supermarket checkout line, I might do see something on the back of someone's neck that they may not be aware of. So I just let them know. So Dan, is there anything you would like to say to Graham? I express then, I'll express again here, it just not a lot you can say in a circumstance like this other than express a huge amount of gratitude. You feel in a moment like this, a second wind that you may have just kind of avoided an otherwise bad fork in a road. It's an opportunity to kind of take that and I don't do something positive with it, pay it forward in some way. So yeah, I mean, Graham, I said it before, but I just owe you a massive debt of thanks. Certainly after the all clear. Yeah, I had a spring in my step and it certainly is a credit to the eagle eye of Graham and to take the time and craft that email and kind of tap me on the shoulder is it's going above and beyond really. Will you be sending each other Christmas cards? I might be sending more than a card to Graham this year. Some of my colleagues have joked saying, is that all you get a beer and a hug? You haven't tasted my home brew beer yet, Graham. I'll wait and you can reserve judgment on that one.

Professor Daniel Angus and Dr Graham Sigs in Australia and two more medical stories that we saw this week that are worth nodding to. First of all on polio, a genetically engineered polio vaccine is showing positive data in its first stage human trials. It's designed to keep the virus used in the vaccine from mutating into a dangerous form by keeping it in its most weakened state. The scientists behind it are hoping the change could finally wipe polio out. And secondly, good news for Danistus Cungae, a former army sergeant in Sri Lanka who has been relieved of the world's largest kidney stone. The stone removed by army doctors weighs 800 grams, more than five times the weight of an average male kidney, and it's even been recognized by Guinness

World Records. Now around this time last week, the world breathed a sigh of relief.

Four children have been found alive more than a month after their plane crash.

Four Colombian children found alive in the Amazon rainforest 40 days after a plane crash.

Their mother and the two pilots died in the crash and the children aged 13, 9, 4 and 1 had to fend for themselves. The children belong to the Witoto indigenous group and after signs were spotted that they were alive, a huge search operation was launched which involved over 200 soldiers and members of the indigenous community. The calm leadership of Leslie, the eldest, has been praised. This is the children's grandmother speaking after they were found.

When her mother was working, she always looked after them. She gave them food.

They knew which fruits to eat in the rainforest. I'm thankful to Mother Earth.

I never let my guard down, me or their grandpa. We prayed all night.

We spoke to General Pedro Sanchez who led Operation Hope and he explained exactly what Leslie had to

do. Leslie without a doubt was the one who kept her younger siblings alive. She managed to get her younger sister out of the arms of her mother who died. She caught her other siblings out too. She found things to keep them alive. She found one of the food packs we threw down from the helicopters. The rainforest is a paradise but it's also very hostile territory. They're wild animals, jaguars and venomous snakes. Trees of up to 20 to 30 meters, you can get lost in 20 meters and the forest is so dense that you can be swallowed by it. It was a miracle not only did they survive the initial impact of the crash but then the 40 days it took to find them. At one point there were 115 soldiers and 93 indigenous guards searching and we found them because their footprints were next to the paw prints of Wilson, one of our dogs involved in the search. He was with them and looked after them but then got lost. In fact at the moment we're still looking for Wilson as one soldier never abandons another. General Pedro Sanchez who has since become the godfather to the youngest of the family and he was speaking to the BBC. All four children are in a stable condition and receiving treatment in Bogotá, Colombia's capital. Now a little secret, I like tea. I really like tea. I like it so much in fact that I usually have not one but two cups of black tea on the go at any one time and it seems I'm not alone. John from Ireland sent in that recording to share the sound of tea being poured from his old red Polish teapot. He says it's not the same if it's a teabag in a mug filled from the kettle. I hear you John but you might prefer coffee like Luca Cordelli who sent us this. This is the sound of a mocha making his coffee. This is the sound that makes me really happy every morning during all my life. Apparently I'm not the only one. 60% of Italians according to a recent survey put the sound of the mocha in the morning as one of the best sounds in their life. I'm going to enjoy my coffee now. Bye. I think we enjoy coffee as well. Did your school have a prom? It's a milestone that many people look back on fondly when they reminisce about their school days, memories of dressing up, dancing with friends and celebrating the end of an era and an unusual prom has taken place in Quebec High School in Quebec City where the senior students decided senior citizens deserved a party too. Come in, come in. We can sit where we want. In my word I'm happy to meet everybody. It's beautiful. Everything's beautiful. The girls in the dresses and they look so nice. We've been chatting away with each one of them and what they want to do when they grow up. We're trying to find out why they invited us. Elsa Meeker, a Dutch exchange student, was one of the pupils who helped to organize the event. We were in leadership class and we were supposed to do a project and we were just googling fun ideas and then I think it was Chloe that came up with oh we should do a prom for senior citizens and we have two proms and we were like such a good idea so then we started setting it up and contacting the elite homes and then it all went rolling yeah. They're just the most respectful people in the world and they make me smile even when I see a person in the bus or whatever. I always greet them and it really yeah it reminds me of my grandparents too. It's just really nice and I'm really happy that it all happened so yeah a lot of reasons to smile the whole time. Some of the guests brought keepsakes from their own school days to show the current students. Steve brought along his slide rule, an old-fashioned tool used to multiply and divide that he has carried with him ever since his days in the classroom. I'm sure there's something from the past. Have you ever seen that? That looks familiar. It's actually just adding logarithms, the logarithms in here and that's how you multiply before calculators. I went through secondary school and high and university. I see you brought some photos too. Yeah I have all kinds of things that's my graduation dress and they're friends. This was our identification card. I graduated here in 56, 57. Wow. Is it my ring

and my pin? I have several of these. They were the prizes and they have the crest on it which was kind of nice but when I opened this one I had really had to laugh. It was for punctuality in attendance. I guess we weren't allowed to steal. I'll have a great prom.

Still to come.

Why Mongolian women are joining the long song tradition.

The Explanation is the podcast from the BBC World Service that goes beyond the spin exploring the important questions about long-running stories and the latest global news. An honest explanation of the events shaping our lives. Search for the explanation wherever you get your BBC podcasts. A lot of people around the world are trying to move towards cleaner greener transport indeed most of the major manufacturers are getting in on developing their own electric vehicles but it isn't just the big corporations. Let's meet Yehia El Bakali co-founder and CEO of a new Anglo-Moroccan technology company called the Atlas E-Mobility Group who has big plans to create the first African designed and engineered electric car. There's a lot going on on the global stage but when it comes to Africa in particular there are not so many initiatives. If you look for example at China there are currently over 600 EV ventures. If you look at the US there is over 200 EV ventures but if you look at African continents there are not so many initiatives around electrification and electric vehicles so that was actually brought our inspiration to take this initiative and I think if we don't make an initiative ourselves as Africans we can't be expecting other car makers to come and rescue us so it should be our own initiative to create something for the continents and beyond. The continent's population is increasing massively and it's expected to reach 2 billion people by 2050. The average age in Africa is about 19 years old so there is a huge young population there and there are so many talents so many untapped opportunities and resources so the question is actually why not why not take an initiative and create something that makes African people proud. And it's interesting because as you say there is this global push towards trying to create electric vehicles and to move away from the regular fossil fuels. What do you anticipate the difficulties being in creating electric vehicles and a market for electric vehicles in Morocco? I mean for us the main three challenges that we find that consumers actually facing when they try to buy an EV is first the range anxiety, second the charging infrastructure availability and third is the affordability. So these are really the three key challenges that the consumer face. Building a car company is definitely challenging

but of course that brings with it that excitement of overcoming challenges every time.

Yahya Elbakali, CEO of the Atlas E-Mobility Group. Velcro whistles and the sound of that's what brings joy to one listener. Amanda Mayurovich from Germany is a roller derby fanatic who got in touch to tell us what gets her heart pumping. All right are you ready? Bear city on three. One, two, three. Bear city! There's just like this electric feeling of excitement in the air and when you hear people skating around you hear the wheels on the floor you hear people trying to do different kinds of stops or hit each other or it's the rip of the velcro and screeching of the wheels the the whistles are just so uplifting and I'm I have shivers right now because I'm just like so excited but yeah and then when it's a big tournament like that just hearing so many people in the arena or wherever it is cheering everyone on because I think that's another thing that's amazing about roller derby is that all of the fans cheer for everyone that's not necessarily like us versus them I know for me whenever I'm cheering I cheer on and I say hey that was a really great hit even if you hit me one of our goals is to just stay happy and positive and

excited. I think when I haven't gone to practice for a while I definitely notice a difference in how I am like that's definitely an outlet that I use to get so much of my energy and emotions out and it's a great way to like get out your frustration or even if I'm like really really happy or excited it's the outlet so that all of the emotions and feelings are not just built up inside of me. Nice job. Good game. Good game. Good game. Good game. Thank you. Good game. And our thanks to Amanda for that. Now imagine sailing a 46 foot yacht and controlling it with your breath. Natasha Lambert is 17 and has cerebral palsy she can't use her arms and legs so her engineer dad invented the technology that helped her sail the Atlantic. Rachel Burden has been speaking to Natasha her dad Gary and mum Amanda. What was it about sailing that you love

did you feel a certain freedom on a boat? Definitely lots of freedom you love being outdoors the weather the wind the rain everything. So this was a passion then that your mum and dad obviously felt that they really wanted to encourage but it was also about practically speaking how you managed to operate a boat yourself right? And then that's where your dad Gary steps in so he's quite handy with this kind of stuff. Do you know much about boat sailing Gary? When we started I knew nothing about boat sailing so it's all I can tell because Natasha's absolutely laughing all over the place here for suggestion. So no we weren't a sailing family when this all started so we had to learn quite rapidly we learned that there were no experts in the controls that Natasha needed so it was down to us to me it was down to me to develop it and and get it to where it is. So who else is in the boat what does the boat look like how does it work? It's a 46 foot catamaran this is the boat we cross the Atlantic in and there was the four of us our family and we also had another four crew on board we were sailing for 18 days day and night and Natasha what about your role in all of this? Natasha basically makes the decisions we put all the information in front of her and then she makes decisions and we carry them out so she's skipper. And Natasha what's this about you steering the boat with your breath is that an accurate way of describing it? It is Natasha has a small tube that is held in place in a helmet and that works the controls of the boat it's wicked so Natasha has full control she can alter the sails and the direction of the boat just by a sip and a puff. It's extraordinary so Natasha what next around the world? She says she's going to give up. She'd like to do a Pacific crossing. Amazing. Natasha Lambert and family who sailed the Atlantic using a sip and a puff. Dave from London is a massive Bruce Springsteen fan and he also happens to have Parkinson's disease and he says the boss has helped him with his symptoms. My happy sound is the sound of Bruce

Springsteen when he first walks out on stage. I diagnosed with Parkinson's 12 years ago and rather than celebrate my parkyversary I was diagnosed with something downbeat and feeling sad. I normally see Bruce Springsteen somewhere in the world so I've travelled to Cape Town I've been to Perth Australia I've been to New York to see Bruce and the moment he walks out on stage the optimistic energy is just brilliant. The crowd are all quiet then the lights dip and you just see this shadowy figure walk out from the back of the stage and you see Bruce and he says hello wherever you are in the world you know hello Edinburgh hello London hello New York and then just goes straight into the track and that that moment just sends me wild tears in my eyes and goosebumps all over. It's the Bruce Springsteen the moment he walks out on stage and greets the crowd it's just a magical moment and it sets you up for the night and I went to see my specialist after a Bruce Springsteen concert. He jokingly said I'm going to prescribe

three Bruce Springsteen concerts a year to you because you're in such good form after seeing him it's amazing so that's my happy sound Bruce walking out on stage cheers. Dave has seen Bruce Springsteen 22 times in total you'll be jetting to Sweden to see him at the end of June and Bruce if you're listening fancy a chat with the happy pod well it's worth a try and now let's end with some song some long song to be precise for centuries a Mongolian celebration would be nothing without this genre of music which gets its name not just from the length of the pieces but also because each syllable of each word is extended a four-minute melody for example may consist of only 10 words

until very recently long song was mostly performed by men and women were actually forbidden from singing some of those songs but times are changing with the Mongolian tourism board now inviting women to showcase their cultural heritage. Hello my name is Orindhya I'm a singer of long song tonight is a closing ceremony of an international conference organized by the government as part of their campaign welcome to Mongolia it's a big event and I'll be singing long song at the climax

long song is a type of music that's been performed for more than a thousand years by nomadic people

in Mongolia it's one of our most distinctive and special art forms and that's why it's been chosen to show off our country at this event when I was little I'd listen to long song at family gatherings it would be sung at weddings at springtime when the horses had had a new fall and I loved it my grandpa was one of the best long song singers in our family and so I'd sit at his knee and listen to it because of that connection I decided I wanted to be a long song singer too long song is part of nomadic life it's traditionally been sung by men on horseback as they rode for hours across the countryside Mongolia has been a patriarchal society since the time of Genghis Khan even till recently there were some songs that were forbidden for women to sing

but times are changing and perceptions are changing and today in many parts of Mongolia there are many more young female long song singers than men I think women's voices are received better here in Mongolia and across the world there's something about the female voice when it sings long song that just seems to touch people men have a bigger vocal range and that can be very impressive to show off but musically there's something very distinctive and different about the way women long song singers breathe and the pure beauty of the sound it's very special in my career I've been invited to more than 40 countries to sing long song promoting Mongolia as a country and showing off our cultural heritage it makes me feel very proud and I'm really looking forward to seeing more women singing long song across the world in the future

the beauty of Mongolian long song

and that's it from us for now if you would like to get involved in the happy pod we would love to hear from you send us the sound that brings you joy the address is global podcast at bbc.co.uk you can also find us on twitter at global news pod this edition was mixed by Javid Gilani the producers were Phoebe Hobson Tracy Gordon and Anna Murphy the editor is Karen Martin I'm Jackie

Leonard and until next time goodbye