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The Other Side of the Future!

Future Lite

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Welcome to Future Lite! No topic is too small, no trivia too trivial, and no fact too unfounded if it can possibly provide entertainment or enlightenment for our readers.

The Cicada Effect

I'm sure all of you know about *The Butterfly Effect* – great short story, terrible movie – that goes something along the lines of a butterfly flapping its wings in Central Park can cause an earthquake in China.

Everything is connected to everything else which could explain the large groups of people that have given up blaming political parties for major disasters in the world, have taken up nets, and are now focusing in on the evil butterflies do instead. The longitudinal studies are still out on this trend but it's definitely noteworthy.

However, today, I would like to reveal an exciting new phenomenon reported here for the first time in this universe – *The Cicada Effect*. It's quite different from *The Butterfly Effect* in that only *some* things are connected to everything else; other things have nothing to do with anything. Here are some other key observations:

1. Whenever you have gazillions of crawling, swarming, flying things involved in mating and breeding and making a lot of noise, people will notice.
2. Even if you plan your entrance very carefully for 17 years, someone can still put a concrete building on top of you and ruin your plans.

I will now report on my personal observation of *The Cicada Effect*. Please keep in mind that I was wearing the official Effect-Observer garb-pith helmet, several hundred yards of mosquito netting, leather elbow-length rose gloves and moon-boots. I observed the entire sequence of events myself.

Well... that is to say, I actually saw the first half of the first event and the rest I constructed through appropriate scholarly research** including forecasting, scenario planning, singularity watching, futures wheeling and dealing and consulting the Delphi. There may have been one or two trips to know sci-fi watering holes but that was only for research and a well-crafted Belvedere martini.

Event One

One bright red-eyed cicada wriggles out of the ground in Silver Spring, Maryland. The cicada looks around and flaps her wings.

Event Two

Gazillions to infinity and beyond more red-eyed cicadas wriggle out of the ground. They all begin flying around and smashing into the windshields of cars commuting into Washington, D.C. Nothing can remove the thick splats. Windshield wipers break under the strain. People are forced to abandon their cars and walk to work or telecommute. Road rage is eliminated. People are losing weight everywhere because they're walking. The obesity crisis is over.

Event Three

All the senators and congressmen are stranded on the beltway, their cell phone batteries dead, no minions anywhere, and they have no choice but to sit on the hood of their limos. They discover to their great surprise they've got cicadas in their ears and when they pull them out all of a sudden they can hear things they never hear before – they hear the voices of other people, people with good ideas. They vow to listen, stop wasting time and money on politics and start working for the country.

Event Four

The time-space continuum is made visible and all the wormholes are charted.

Event Five

Schrödinger's cat is let out of the box.

Event Six

The Hitchhiker's guide to the Galaxy publishes its online version along with the carryout number for the Restaurant at the End of the Universe.

Now, here's the challenge. Which of these events seems the most unlikely to happen during the next 17 years?

***Okay, so I made it all up!*