



NMSR Reports

The Newsletter of the
New Mexicans for Science and Reason

NMSR Reports, David E. Thomas, Editor, 1201 N. Avenida de Chamiso Pl., Socorro, NM 87801 © 2023

MAY MEETING:
NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE AND REASON will hear
Keith Gilbert
on
“Counterintuitive Corners of The Mind”
=>MAY 15th, 2024 7:00PM<=
=>Attend online on Zoom!<=

SkeptiCamp
New Mexico

June 1st & 2nd, 2024



Bigfoot
UFOs
Quackery

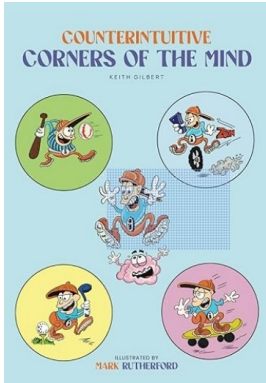
Ghosts
Moral Panics
and more!

www.skepticampnm.com


FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED!

Coming May 15th, 2024, Keith Gilbert, “Counterintuitive Corners of The Mind”

Our own Keith Gilbert has penned a non-fiction book titled “Counterintuitive Corners of The Mind.” It is a guide on “how to hone critical thinking skills in our wobbly world.” It is available on Amazon and Kindle, https://www.amazon.com/Counterintuitive-Corners-Mind-Keith-Gilbert/dp/B0CTHWL8RS/ref=sr_1_1



COUNTERINTUITIVE CORNERS OF THE MIND
KEITH GILBERT



COUNTERINTUITIVE CORNERS OF THE MIND

My mission is to paint a path leading to better mastery of critical thinking. First, I'll share examples of my distinctive set of counterintuitive.

Next, we'll discuss the ubiquity of these perplexing events among society, nature, our solar system, and the universe. Finally, in Appendix C, I offer a set of more than 50 problems (with solutions) to hone your critical thinking acumen - embedded in each problem are counterintuitive elements.



Coming on June 1st and 2nd, 2024:
SKEPTICAMP! 🔥 🔥 🔥

Also in this issue:
Science Fair Winners
Haiku!

New Mexicans for Science & Reason (NMSR)

NMSR is a non-profit group with the goals of promoting science, the scientific method, rational thinking, and critical examination of dubious or extraordinary claims. NMSR meets at 7 PM on the second Wednesday of each month, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at a secure, undisclosed location. NMSR Reports is its official newsletter.

NMSR officers:

Dave Thomas, President

1201 Avenida de Chamiso Pl., Socorro, NM 87801
nmsrdave@swcp.com

John Covan, Vice-President

jmcovan@juno.com

Debbie Thomas, Treasurer

3205 Alcazar NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110
abqdebbie@comcast.net

Mark Fraser CNM Sponsor

ippon@earthlink.net

Kim Johnson, Industrial Physicist

kimber@comcast.net

Marilyn Savitt-Kring, Science Mom

Membership: \$25/year (hardcopy newsletter), or \$15/year (downloadable PDF), make your check payable to NMSR, send to treasurer (Debbie Thomas).

NMSR Advisors:

- *Mark Boslough*,
 Adjunct Professor, University of New Mexico.
- *John Geissman*
 Professor of Paleomagnetism
- *Alan Hale*
 Southwest Institute for Space Research

Cyber-Cypher Clue: U = V, Y = X.

Bonus Puzzle Clue: Consider the sequence $n \pmod{17}$.

WANTED: READER ARTICLES & COMMENTARY

Got something to share with NMSR members? **Send it in!** ATTN: Dave Thomas, Editor, NMSR Reports.

REMEMBER, our next NMSR meeting is **May 15th at 7PM!**

Meetings, Live or Zoom? Vote!

www.roundorflat.com/covid19



PUZZLE TIME!

[Please send solutions to Dave Thomas at: nmsrdave@swcp.com, or at 1201 N Avenida de Chamiso Pl., Socorro NM 87801.]

Cyber-Cypher: MAY PUZZLE

(Submitted by Dave Thomas)

The following letters are a simple substitution cypher. If R stands for L, R will stand for L everywhere. Your Cyber-Cypher Clue: Clue? Oh, well - if you must, see p. 2.

" C Z L W Q V S H P D K D R R L W X D B
 V L U L W G L D V C C H W L B C Q T H V ,
 I Q C H V K E C H Z H K R D G D V ' B
 P H H C K H V S L V H Q S Z C H L V D I K L
 Z J G C H T Q C C Z L H C Z L W
 B H G L X Z D C Z J S Z L W . " - - C Z H G D B
 Z Q Y K L E

SUPER SECRET WORD!

However you prefer to do the cypher itself (above or below), simply duplicate those actions on the alphabetized row of cypher letters below. You'll build an answer key, and you'll also reveal - the Super Secret Word!

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

APRIL 2024 CYPHER SOLUTION

"BUYING A BUS TICKET TO GO SOMEWHERE TO GET IT IS NOT THE WORST THING IN THE WORLD." - FOX BUSINESS ANALYST MARK SIMONE, ON ARIZONA'S NEW ABORTION BAN.

Esteemed April Code Crackers: Mike Arms* and Austin Moede*!

*Secret Word: "TROD INEXCUSABLY"

SOCORRO STUMPER

Need more Secret Word Cryptograms?

New puzzles every week at
www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm

May Bonus: "Three to the What?"

Submitted by Dave Thomas

$$3^{900} \pmod{17}$$

The May Bonus: Evaluate $3^{900} \pmod{17}$.

April Bonus Solution: "That's Some Sum"

Submitted by K. Sengupta

Solve:

$$\begin{array}{r}
 \text{MISSSSS} = \text{MARILYN} \\
 + \text{MONROE} \\
 + 1926 \\
 + 1962 \\
 + M
 \end{array}$$

where:

$$AM = \text{sod}(NORMA)$$

$$\text{dr}(\text{MARRY}) + \text{dr}(\text{MILLIONAIRE}) = 15$$

Note: sod(x) denotes the sum of digits of x and, dr(x) denotes the digital root of x.

ANSWER: E=0 S=1 A=2 R=3 M=4 Y=5 O=6 I=7 L=8 N=9

AM=24 NORMA=96342 sod(NORMA)=24

MARRY=42335 dr(MARRY)=8

MILLIONAIRE=47887692730 dr(MILLIONAIRE)=7

MARILYN=4237859

MONROE=469360

marilyn_monroe_right_side_sum=4711111

MISSSSS=4711111

AEILMNORS=207849631.

Congrats to: Mike Arms (NM)!

Bonus April Bonus:

Submitted by Gene Aronson:

PROVE: $f(n, k) = n^k - n$ is divisible for all positive integers n and all prime numbers k.

Solution: In terms of Fermat's Little Theorem, we have: $n^k \equiv n \pmod k$, where k is a prime number. Therefore, $f(n, k) = n^k - n$ is divisible by any prime number k, whenever n is a positive integer. Again, $f(n, k) = n^k - n = n(n^{k-1} - 1)$. So that, $f(n, k)$ is divisible by n. Therefore, $f(n, k)$ is divisible by all positive integers n and prime numbers k.

2024 Science Fair Winners!

In conjunction with the Coalition for Excellence in Science and Math Education (CESE.org), NMSR is pleased to announce this year's winners for projects promoting good science in the public interest, at the New Mexico Science and Engineering Fair (NMSEF).

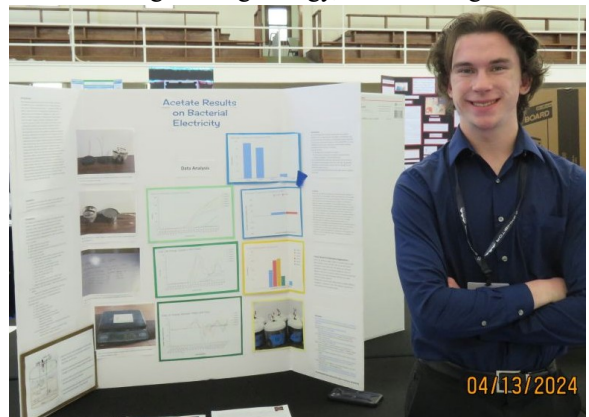
Winners in the Junior Category (NMSR) are Abigail Baum and Emma Munson. Senior Category winners (CESE) are Alex McGee and Peyton Kerr.



Abigail Baum, Albuquerque Institute of Math Science, Junior Biomedical and Behavioral Sciences, "The Best Effortless Method to Control Heart Rate"



Emma Munson, Los Alamitos Middle School, Junior Environmental Engineering Energy, "Hot Garbage!"



Alex McGee, Rio Rancho High School, Senior Animal Sciences Microbiology, "Acetate Results on Bacterial Electricity"



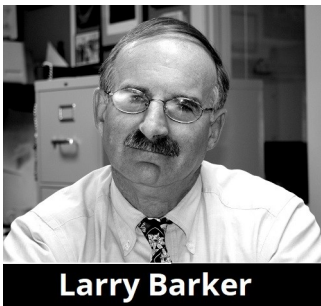
Peyton Kerr, Albuquerque Institute of Math Science Senior Physics, Astronomy, and Materials Sciences, "Investigating the Effectiveness and Necessity of the Two Current Radon Abatement Systems"

SkeptiCamp NM LineUp!

Save the date and plan to join New Mexicans for Science and Reason for the inaugural SkeptiCamp, to be held on June 1st and 2nd, 2024. The main conference will take place at CNM's WORKforce Training Center, 5600 Eagle Rock Ave NE, Albuquerque, NM 87113. Social events will also take place the preceding evening and throughout the weekend; come for the talks and stay for the community!

These talented speakers are scheduled to appear at Skepticamp NM, June 1st and 2nd! Visit www.SkeptiCampNM.com for more detailed biographies and talk descriptions!

Larry Barker: Truth Or Fiction: Roswell, Aztec, Bigfoot, Chupacabra



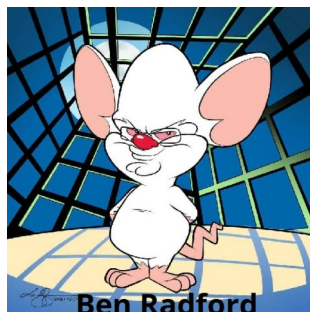
Larry Barker

His name is synonymous with investigative reporting in New Mexico. Larry Barker has led the KRQE News 13 investigative team since 2004. Barker began his broadcasting career in 1975 at an Albuquerque radio station, and quickly moved on to television. He began as a producer, and his passion for uncovering scandals and wrong-doing soon led him into investigative reporting. Barker was a founding member of the ground-breaking "Target 7" team.

Barker's award-winning investigative reports have exposed corruption, caught con men in the act, and helped change laws. Barker has traveled the world in his journalistic quest tracking fugitive spies to Moscow, con men to the back streets of London, exposing hijackers hiding in Cuba, and following stories to Mexico, the Persian Gulf and the Bahamas.

Ben Radford, The Blue Whale Game: Moral Panic or Public Threat?

In 2016 scary warnings circulated on social media asking parents, teachers, and police to beware of a hidden threat to children: a sinister online "game" that can lead to death. Many panicky social media posts plead for parents to take action against the "Blue Whale" suicide game believed to be a hidden online social media group whose goal is encouraging children to kill themselves. One warning from the British government explained that "members have to do different tasks for 50 days. They include self-harming, watching horror movies and waking up at unusual hours, but these gradually get more extreme. But on the 50th day, the controlling manipulators behind the game reportedly instruct the youngsters to commit suicide." The Blue Whale Game has many hallmarks



Ben Radford

of a classic moral panic, including "Stranger Danger" fears, concerns over new technology, and references to an evil conspiracy. While most of the reports of teen suicides were from Russia, Benjamin Radford investigated news reports of the first two alleged victims of the Blue Whale game in the United States: a fifteen-year-old boy in San Antonio, Texas and a sixteen-year-old girl in Atlanta, Georgia.

Adrienne Hill, Not a Ghost of a Chance

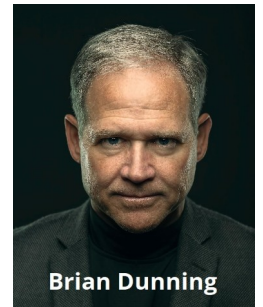


Adrienne Hill

Adrienne Hill, a seasoned photography hobbyist, was taken aback when she discovered, upon joining the Guerilla Skepticism on Wikipedia project, that various artifacts and techniques commonly understood by photographers were attributed to spirits by many individuals. Adrienne will delve into the history of spirit photography and explore some of the current ghostly photographic trends. She may even include a true, spine-tingling, organic ghost story.

Brian Dunning, The UFO Movie THEY Don't Want You To See

Brian Dunning is a science writer and author, and also the Executive Director of Skeptoid Media. The whole site is mostly his gig. You can also follow him on Twitter and all the other social media stuff too. He lives in Bend, Oregon and can be found sometimes inside his Jeep, but often underneath it.



Brian Dunning

"The UFO Movie THEY Don't Want You to See" is a feature-length indie documentary film produced by Brian Dunning. In an age when misinformation, alternative facts, and conspiracy theories have become mainstream, UFOs have risen to become one of the most-talked about pop culture phenomena. With all of this noise, how can we expect anyone to know how much of this is true? What is in our skies? What do we know, and how do we know it? And most importantly: Are we being visited?

Susan Gerbic: Telling Stories with Wikipedia

Susan Gerbic founded and runs the crowd-sourced project Guerrilla Skepticism on Wikipedia (GSoW) which has written over 2 thousand Wikipedia articles concerning science, pseudoscience and people of science. With over a hundred editors from all over the world, located in a private Facebook group called The Secret Cabal, they work in many languages and are always looking for more people to train for the team. Susan will explain the project as well as remind us of the importance of one of the most visited websites in the world. Bring your questions!



Susan Gerbic

Further Reading: [Birds, Brains and Blisters – We really need your help](#)

Dave Thomas, Flat Earth Follies

Dave Thomas will discuss the history of the flat earth movement, and will describe several methods for determining the shape and size of our planet that anyone can explore. He will discuss the methods, motivation, and memes of modern-day Flat Earthers.

Mr. Dave Thomas is a physicist and mathematician. He received bachelor degrees in mathematics and in physics, and a master of science in mathematics, from the New Mexico Institute of Mining and Technology, where he was awarded the Brown Medal and the Langmuir Award. Dave is president of the science group New Mexicans for Science and Reason, and also is a Fellow of CSI (Committee for Skeptical Inquiry), the publishers of Skeptical Inquirer.



Dave Thomas

Celestia N. Ward, Creativity and critical thinking: What can art teach about skepticism?

Celestia Ward is a PR Coordinator at Las Vegas-based Imagine Communications and a longtime editor, writer, caricature artist, illustrator, and skeptic. She produces and cohosts “Squaring the Strange,” a podcast examining the mysterious and mundane since 2017. Her illustrations and articles have appeared in Skeptical Inquirer and other skeptical and freethought publications, and she has spoken on creativity and critical



Celestia N. Ward

thinking at several major skeptical gatherings including the Skeptic Track at DragonCon in Atlanta and WeCanReason in Calgary.

Dr. Frank T. Etscorn III,

Quackery. What fools us mortals be

- PhD Peabody College of Vanderbilt University, experimental psychology, concentration in pharmacology
- Kennedy Center Scientist, Human Development Lab, Nashville TN
- New Mexico Tech, Prof Emeritus, Psychology, ex Dean of Students
- BA, MA Western Kentucky University
- Nicotine Patch invented by accident at New Mexico Tech



Frank T. Etscorn III,

Kurly Tlapoyawa, The Fight Against Pseudoarchaeology

Kurly Tlapoyawa is an archaeologist, ethnohistorian, and

filmmaker. His research covers Mesoamerica, the American Southwest, and the historical connections between the two regions. He is the author of numerous books and has presented lectures at the University of New Mexico, Harvard University, Yale University, San Diego State University, and numerous others. He most recently released his documentary short film Guardians of the Purple Kingdom, and is a cultural consultant for Nickelodeon Animation Studios.

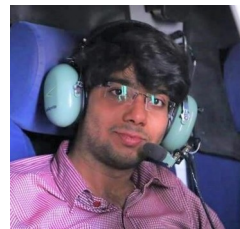


Kurly Tlapoyawa

Please RSVP to Dave Thomas, nmsrdave@swcp.com, if you plan to attend!

April 17th, 2024 NMSR Meeting:

Dr. Arjak Bhattacharjee



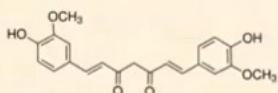
A staff member at New Mexico Tech, Arjak discussed the Indian Knowledge System (IKS). His articles say “The Indian Knowledge Systems comprising Jnan, Vignan, and Jeevan Darshan have evolved out of experience, observation, experimentation, and rigorous analysis. This tradition of validating and putting into practice has impacted our education, arts, administration, law, justice, health, manufacturing, and commerce.”

Arjak discussed his new book, [Ancient Indian Science, Technologies & Culture: Decoding the Vedas from Engineering to Consciousness](#), co-written with Dr. Sukanta Majumdar, Ms. Arpita Routray and Prof. Debasish Ghorui. Here follows his description of the book’s content. “*Did ancient India shape the face of the modern world? The irrefutable truth is that this ancient nation, that is over 5,000 years old, gifted the world a treasure trove of knowledge-laden ancient Sanskrit texts like the Vedas, which inform and guide us in every aspect of human life, from education to enlightenment. This book aims to summarize the contributions of ancient Indian science, technology and culture in shaping the face of humanity. While it is impossible to summarize the vast contributions of ancient India in every aspect of human life in a single book, the objective of this illustrated book is not only to fill that gap a little, but also to present cutting-edge scientific research evidence that establishes this farsightedness of ancient Indian civilization. This book brings ancient India’s contributions to medicine, engineering, art, architecture, agriculture, basic science and consciousness studies to the gaze of general readers who may not have any background in the Sanskrit language. Special emphasis is given to important medical and surgical discoveries in ancient India and their applicability in modern medicine. Ancient India’s contributions to various branches of advanced engineering such as computer science, electrical engineering, metallurgy, mechanical and materials engineering and aerospace technology are summarized in this book, along with modern scientific research. Ancient Indian concepts of town planning, art and architecture are also*

covered. Indian knowledge systems pertaining to various branches of mathematics, astronomy, chemistry and consciousness engineering too are an integral part of this book. Most importantly, the authors have researched and cited over 250 evidence-based recent research articles, including those published in the world's top scientific journals such as Nature, Science and Lancet that unequivocally establish ancient India's glorious technological advances in many modern branches of medicine, engineering and technology which are yet a mystery to the rest of the world."

One specific example on applications of IKS

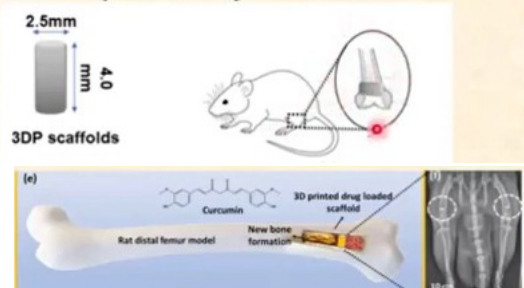
Curcumin from rhizome of turmeric herb (*Curcuma longa*)



Advantages
 Anti-oxidant
 Anti-inflammatory
 Chemo-preventive

Limitations
 Poor bioavailability
 Low solubility

Modern research to increase the curcumin release and absorption in body



A free-wheeling discussion delved into several

concepts further, including consciousness, AI, Free Will and more.

NMSR thanks Dr. Bhattacharjee for a thoughtful presentation. **Videos of this and past meetings are available at <http://www.nmsr.org/meetings.htm>.**

Skeptiverse Haiku for May!
by Keith Thomas

Oh, hic'ry, dic'ry, Dic'ry doc./Some gator tales Are clearly a crock!	For St. Patrick's Day, Green beer or an irish cream Matcha shamrock shake?
What's good for the goose Is not necessarily Good for the gander.	When eclipses dim Our sun-drenched skies./We are prone To poeticize.
Socorro – not Taos – Has ninety eight chihuahuas In one unique house!	Do you think the name Should be/Sasquatch studies or Bigfootology?

The NMSR e-mail list is fun! It's an e-mail list with news announcements of interest to NMSR members, discussions about news of the times, and more. To join, send a request to nmsrdave@swcp.com.

DUES check the date on your mailing label. If it's time for you to renew, or to make a contribution, please make your check **payable to NMSR**, and send it to Debbie Thomas, NMSR Treasurer, 3205 Alcazar NE, Albuquerque., NM 87110
 Name _____
 Address _____
 Membership \$25 per annum (hard copy newsletter), or \$15 per annum (online newsletter).

Thanks to: John Covan, Debbie Thomas, Keith Thomas and all of our Puzzlers!

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IN THIS ISSUE:
 Future Meetings Announced
 New Puzzles!
 April Meeting: Arjak
 Bhattacharjee
 Skeptical Haiku!
 SKEPTICAMP NMI
 coming June 1st and 2nd!

May 15th Meeting:
 Keith Gilbert
 on Critical Thinking
 7PM on Zoom