

Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday April 28 2024

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The Grand Canyon of Arizona



goodfreephotos.com

Grand Canyon National Park, in Northern Arizona, encompasses 278 miles (447 km) of the Colorado River and adjacent uplands. Located on ancestral homeland of 11 Associated Tribes, Grand Canyon is one of the most spectacular examples of erosion anywhere in the world—unmatched in the incomparable vistas it offers visitors from the rims.

<https://www.humfer.net/gcanyon/index.html>

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By the Way, Have You Noticed Spring Has Sprung?

Spring in Blossom Around the World



*People walk past a blooming cherry blossom tree at St James' Park in London, Britain March 7.
Reuters/Maja Smiejkowska*

Cherry trees bloom in springtime around the world

<https://bit.ly/3TOgDQk>

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Island Rattlesnakes More Likely to Strike Than Their Mainland Kin

Disparity may be due to island exposure to large herbivores



William Hayes had more trouble subduing southern Pacific rattlesnakes such as this one

*collected from Santa Catalina Island than ones caught in mainland California.
Loma Linda University School Of Medicine*

Researchers dating back to Charles Darwin have noted that island populations are generally gentler, likely because in these isolated habitats, they rarely face the variety and sheer number of predators seen on the mainland. Not so say these Catalina Island 'hotties.'

<https://bit.ly/3xtWpDU>

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New Photos Show One of the World's Rarest Hummingbirds



Carole Turek

The Santa Marta Sabrewing was only rediscovered as recently as 2022. Now, a new video shows it in beautiful detail. In the video, the hummingbird can be seen singing with its pearlescent shining blue and green feathers on display. In one part, the bird struts its stuff more, fanning its wings and tail feathers out, mimicking a beta fish among the trees.

<https://bit.ly/3TGoC1F>

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*In a parallel universe
there's a weird cat living with eleven little old ladies*

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After Her Bath, Viola Strolls Streets of Butte, Montana



*Elephant stops traffic in Butte, Montana.
Brittany Mcginnis Via Storyful*

A representative for Carson & Barnes, the elephant handler's office, confirmed in a statement that the elephant, called Viola, "was startled by the backfire of a nearby truck" during "her routine bath."

<https://bit.ly/3w597sc>

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Delta Is Changing How It Boards Passengers Starting May 1



the-express.com

If you're flying on the airline, you'll have to know what zone number you're in to board in the correct sequence. The move is hardly innovative, experts say, and instead reflects a return to the traditional way of boarding passengers followed by most airlines.

In a statement to CBS MoneyWatch, Delta said the "simple change" will "provide customers more clarity into the boarding sequence and make the boarding process more intuitive—especially for infrequent travelers and/or customers who might face a language barrier at the gate."

<https://bit.ly/441kHS0>

If you figure out how it's an improvement, please let me know.

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Space Solar Power Project Ends First In-Space Mission

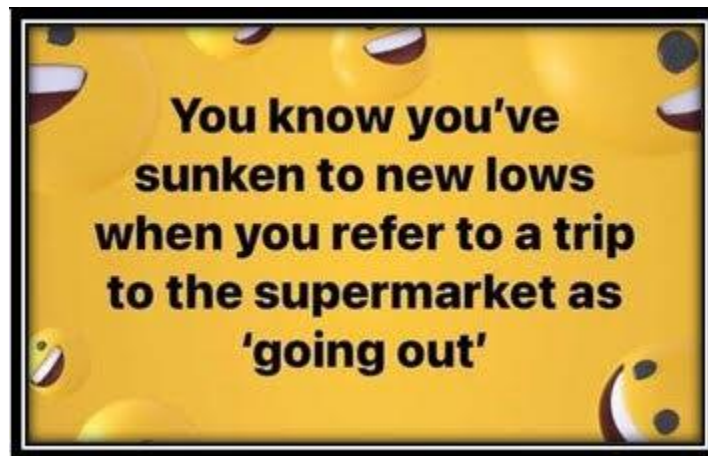


A view from inside MAPLE, which will demonstrate wireless power transmission in space. The top receiver is receiving power in this picture, and it is lit by this wirelessly transmitted power. Caltech

One year ago, Caltech's Space Solar Power Demonstrator (SSPD-1) launched into space to demonstrate and test three technological innovations that are among those necessary to make space solar power a reality.

<https://bit.ly/3SkaNGM>

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Earth Is Spinning Faster Than It Used To.

Clocks might have to skip a second to keep up.



Custodian Ray Keen inspects a clock face before changing the time on the 100-year-old clock atop the Clay County Courthouse Saturday, March 8, 2014, in Clay Center, Kansas.

Charlie Riedel / AP

Earth takes about 24 hours to rotate, but the key word is *about*.

For thousands of years, the Earth has been generally slowing down, with the rate varying from time to time, said Agnew and Judah Levine, a physicist for the time and frequency division of the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

<https://bit.ly/4ai92QZ>

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Boeing's Snazzy (and Flexible) Starliner Spacesuits



Boeing spacesuits being used by three NASA astronauts. From left: Mike Fincke (Starliner-1 commander), Suni Williams (Crew Flight Test pilot) and Butch Wilmore (Crew Flight Test commander). The photo was taken during a crew validation test on Oct. 18, 2022, during which they suited up and tested out a pressurized crew module to in part assess suit functionality. (Image credit: NASA)

"This suit is an ascent-entry suit, which means that it's made to be in use in the interior of our vehicle," Tori Wills Pedrotty, Starliner spacesuit lead, told reporters here at JSC March 21. She also demonstrated how the last 40 years have seen substantial advances in spacesuit design since NASA's space shuttle ascent suits were designed.

"This will just prove to the world that we're ready."

<https://bit.ly/3JvLpZb>

Now if Boeing can manage to ready the vehicle for launch.

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Carrier Landing Clinic: Textbook Trap



nationalinterest.com

<https://youtu.be/AAILvWvOrOc?t=2>

It's not always this picture perfect but this is what you'd like to see.

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Some call it multi-tasking, I call it doing something else while I try to remember what I was doing in the first place

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Beavers Parachute from Planes in Footage from 1948

Skydiving beavers. What could possibly go wrong?



*A beaver that may or may not have parachuted out of a plane.
/ by Marc Guitard/Moment/Getty Images*

Over the years, Idaho Fish and Game has tried its best to keep beavers safely away from the hustle and bustle. To this end, the agency has experimented with a number of different tactics—but one idea from 1948 really, uh, jumps out.

Apparently, horses and mules were easily spooked by the beavers—the rodents' constant movement and pungent smell unnerved the pack animals. So Heter decided to try flying the beavers in. This was right after World War II and there was a surplus of parachutes, so the proposed plan re-purposed supplies that would otherwise sit around in storage.

With the help of test beaver Geronimo, Heter created a special wooden box that opened on impact. In total, 76 beavers were dropped in Chamberlain Basin, with all but one surviving. They went on to live fruitful, busy lives in their remote new home.

<https://youtu.be/rpWKd9uT2Ro>

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Using Your iPhone As Your Second Camera for Travel Photography



insider.kelbyone.com

https://youtu.be/gWqR_SGyf1Q

Scott Kelby will change how you, as a photographer, think of your iPhone's camera. Yes, you can use your mobile phone as your second camera while travelling, and still come out with awesome photos!

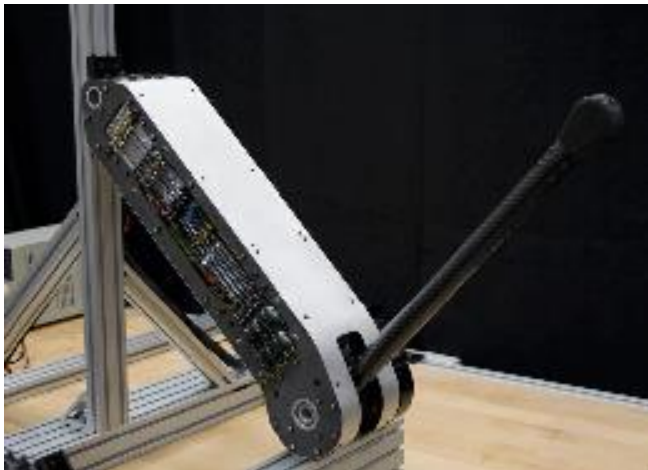
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The invention of fire.

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Replacement for Traditional Motors for Next-Gen Robots



*Energy-recycling actuator prototype.
(Image credit: Erez Krimsky)*

Researchers have designed a spring-assisted actuator – a device that can accomplish dynamic tasks using a fraction of the energy previously required.

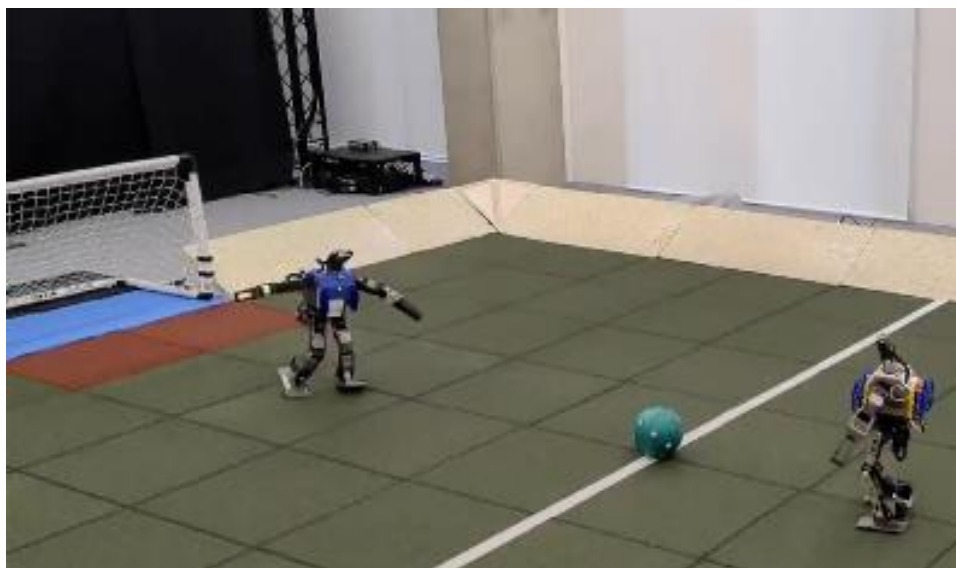
“Rather than wasting lots of electricity to just sit there humming away and generating heat, our actuator uses these clutches to achieve the very high levels of efficiency that we see from electric motors in continuous processes, without giving up on controllability and other features that make electric motors attractive,” said Steve Collins, associate professor of mechanical engineering at Stanford and senior author of the paper.

<https://bit.ly/3IZmME2>

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Watch Two Tiny, AI-Powered Robots Play Soccer

Google DeepMind's bipedal bots go head-to-head after years of prep.



Deep reinforcement learning allowed a pair of robots to play against one another.
Credit: Google DeepMind / Tuomas Haarnoja

https://www.popsci.com/technology/deepmind-robot-soccer/?utm_source=join1440&utm_medium=email&utm_placement=newsletter

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Study Reveals Orcas Aren't All the Same Species

Scientists suggest that killer whales be divided into two distinct species.



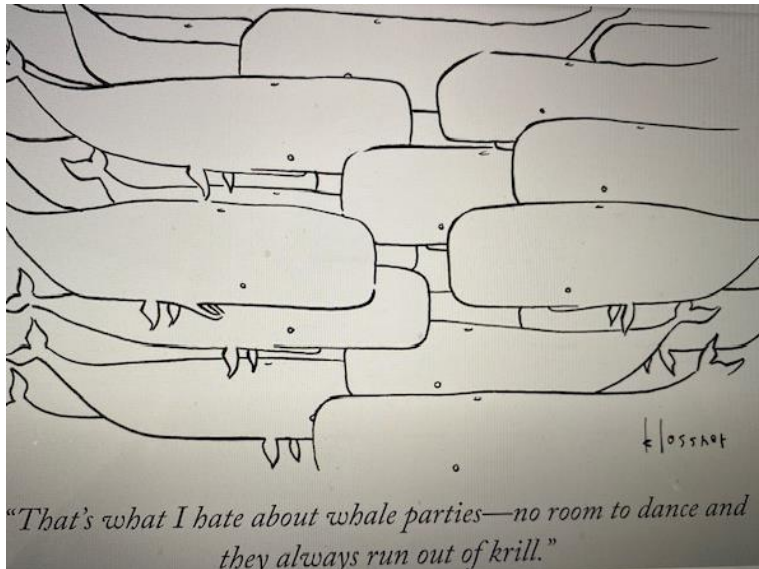
*A Bigg's killer whale in Saratoga Passage near Oak Harbor, Washington.
(Image credit: Tim Schofield via Alamy)*

Orcas have long been categorized as a single species, although some scientists have questioned this classification in recent decades. Now, researchers propose that two orca populations in the eastern North Pacific Ocean are actually two distinct species.

In a study published March 27 in the journal [Royal Society Open Science](https://doi.org/10.1098/rsos.180200), the scientists compared two groups of orcas (*Orcinus orca*) — resident and Bigg's killer whales — and cited a number of distinct differences.

<https://bit.ly/3xiHegP>

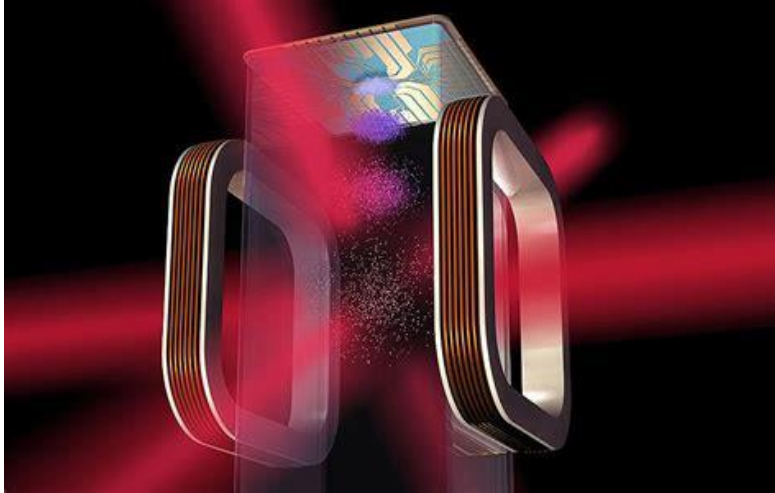
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You're all invited to join my "Who Cries for the Krill" campaign

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NASA's Cold Atom Lab Sets Stage for Quantum Chemistry in Space



NASA

For the first time in space, scientists have produced a quantum gas containing two types of atoms. Accomplished with NASA's Cold Atom Laboratory aboard the International Space Station, the achievement marks another step toward bringing quantum technologies currently available only on Earth into space.

<https://bit.ly/40JH6Bi>

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U.S. Debt Interest Payments Reach \$1 Trillion



Voronoi for Visual Capitalist

The cost of paying for America’s national debt crossed the \$1 trillion dollar mark in 2023, driven by high interest rates and a record \$34 trillion mountain of debt.

At current rates, the U.S. national debt is growing by a remarkable \$1 trillion about every 100 days, equal to roughly \$3.6 trillion per year.

<https://bit.ly/3U3D5F8>

Few more years and Congress won't need to worry about a defense budget.

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Some Quotable Celebrity Quotes

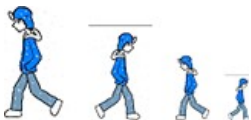


rwpikeblogspot

https://youtu.be/wDJ4IsTx_M

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My Walking Thoughts



For Sunday April 28 2024

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Aviation Safety

I have kept quiet on Boeing’s troubles believing it was abundantly clear that the entire subject of aviation safety and its principal handmaiden, quality control, were in for a thorough overhaul. Unfortunately, the following article for AV web knocked that excuse into a cocked hat: [You can read it here.](#)

Boeing Needs Another Accountant as CEO, Says Ryanair CEO

Conventional wisdom tells us that sellers ought to listen to their buyers because "...the buyer is always right," but in this case I think Michael O'Leary of Ryanair (who came to the post from KMPG Accounting) has his wires crossed.

The issue is not a matter of bean-counters versus production people, rather what we're seeing is the absence of leadership—leadership...leadership...leadership— not just at the highest levels but clear down to the work floor. Yes, money, material, and labor concerns are important elements of the equation, but these are of secondary importance to the public's demand for assured safety consciousness, and that's where the focus needs to be directed.

In this regard I'd like to offer an example of how an entire culture was turned around in the world of Naval Aviation in the early 1960s by the introduction of what is known as the Naval Aviation Training and Operations Procedure Standardization (NATOPS) that today stands as a posture child in the realm of flight safety.

While many factors are involved, NATOPS' central feature was the demand for unremitting command attention—military jargon for leadership—to bring about a culture change where the boss says, "this is what needs to be done and here's how we're going to do it...period."

When I first started flying in the military (late 1950s), Naval Aviation's accident rate stood at seven accidents for every 10,000 hours of flight time. Put another way it equated to one accident for every 1,500 flight hours, which was unsat from either the pilot or aircraft perspective...particularly the latter in those austere days, where the unit cost was skyrocketing with the advent of jets.

Fast forward to today when Naval Aviation's accident rate stands at slightly more than one accident per 100,000 flight hours, a figure that includes such high-risk activities as carrier and combat operations. By comparison, general aviation's record stands at seven accidents per 100,000 flight hours and commercial aviation at 0.00001 fatalities per flight hour...pretty good but short of what it could and should be.

At the start of the NATOPS process, each aircraft type along with its entire operating environment was subjected to minute scrutiny from which standard operating procedures emerged and continue to evolve today. It is an ever-deepening pool of knowledge and experience treading the fine line between safety and combat superiority.

The significant point to the story, however, is that NATOPS would never have gotten out of the chocks had it not be for the command attention that basically said to everyone involved, "Get with the program or go find another job."

Not weeks or months, but within hours, I and my hotshot buddies got the picture, getting on with the program as the zero-tolerance feature struck home.

Sure, things are different with the military than in the civilian world—after all, you don't have someone like the Chief of Naval Operations saying to his subordinates, "Make it happen or walk the plank," but the private sector folks just as surely have the ability and *obligation* to hold the feet of their own employees to the fire and just as firmly those of their contractors by stipulating minimum safety program and performance standards.

Without leadership and plans for achieving it, safety is little more than a nice little collection of platitudes. Just as the originators of NATOPS recognized nearly 70 years ago, those in the aviation arena today have a mandate to institute zero-tolerance quality control processes to reestablish public confidence in their behavior and products and now with attention drawn to the situation is the time for action.

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