

Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday March 17 2024

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The Pencil Nebula Supernova Shock Wave



Image Credit & Copyright: Helge Buesing

This supernova shock wave plows through interstellar space at over 500,000 kilometers per hour.

Centered and moving upward in the sharply detailed color composite its thin, bright, braided filaments are actually long ripples in a cosmic sheet of glowing gas seen almost edge-on.

Discovered in the 1840s by Sir John Herschel, the narrow-looking nebula is sometimes known as Herschel's Ray. Cataloged as NGC 2736, its pointed appearance suggests its modern popular name, the Pencil Nebula.

The Pencil Nebula is about 800 light-years away. Nearly 5 light-years long it represents only a small part of the Vela supernova remnant though. The enormous Vela remnant itself is around 100 light-years in diameter, the expanding debris cloud of a star that was seen to explode about 11,000 years ago.

Initially, the section of the shock wave seen as the Pencil nebula was moving at millions of kilometers per hour but has slowed considerably, sweeping up surrounding interstellar material.

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Antivenom Universal Solution to Lethal Snakebites? Maybe.

Synthetic antibody neutralizes a key neurotoxin in different snakes from Asia and Africa



A new synthetic human antibody can neutralize venom from the notorious black mamba and three other snakes.

Matthijs Kuijpers/Alamy

Researchers have discovered a potent antibody that can neutralize a key type of neurotoxin produced by four different deadly snake species from South Asia, Southeast Asia, and Africa—a step toward an antivenom that could be used on any of the 200 or so dangerous venomous snakes throughout the world.

<https://bit.ly/3SO757h>

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Why Are There So Many Snakes?

Thousands of species of snakes slither across the globe. Researchers think this is a product of a mysterious singularity event.



An eyelash pitviper from the New World tropics. This species feeds on small vertebrates, including frogs, lizards, bats, and birds.

Credit: Tristan Schramer, University of Michigan

Using new genetic sequences from more than 1,000 species and additional existing data from nearly 7,000 reptile species, the researchers constructed one of the most detailed ever evolutionary trees of lizards and snakes, which together are known as squamates. Their phylogenetic map confirmed that snakes are evolving into new ecological niches and physical forms about three times faster than other squamates, and that most of that evolution has occurred over the past 70 to 100 million years or so.

<https://bit.ly/42PecAU>

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The Great Sandhill Crane Migration



BirdImages/ iStock

Every February, Nebraska's Crane Trust kicks off its annual aerial survey of the sandhill cranes that make a pit stop along the state's Platte River before heading farther north. And this year, monitors were treated to a record-breaking start to the migration season: Their first count on Feb. 14 tallied around 38,000 sandhill cranes, the highest number since the surveys began in 1998.

For reference, last year's count around this time was about 6,400, but biologists said the new record makes sense given the current mild winter temperatures in Nebraska. As for what the rest of the migration season has in store, it's hard to know.

"Years when we see larger numbers earlier in February often result in peak numbers of cranes in early/mid-March. However, daily/weekly weather patterns still play a huge role in [the] number of new arrivals," wildlife biologist Bethany Ostrom explained in a recent update from the Crane Trust.

What we do know, though, is that from now until mid-April, hundreds of thousands more of the birds — 80% of the entire species — will stop off in the Cornhusker State, Smithsonian Magazine reports. They'll feast on corn kernels left over from the fall harvest and then make their way to their final destination: breeding grounds in Alaska, Canada, and eastern Siberia.

<https://youtu.be/Nr8N27eKZuA>

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How Does the Brain Make Decisions?



HM News with AI in Adobe Firefly

A mouse study provides insights into communication between neurons during decision-making.

Mice were tasked with choosing which way to go in a maze to find a reward. The researchers found that a mouse's decision to go left or right activated sequential groups of neurons, culminating in the suppression of neurons linked to the opposite choice. Findings appear in February 21st issue of [Nature](#).

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How Do Whales Sing Underwater?

Scientists Say They've Finally Cracked the Code



Sean Steininger/ iStock

Whale songs are a well-known phenomenon in both the scientific world and popular culture (looking at you *Finding Nemo*). But the how behind baleen whales' distinctive underwater noises remained a mystery in the 50 years since humans discovered them.

Thankfully, recent research has finally cracked the code of whale communication, finding that the marine mammals have unique mechanisms in their voice boxes that enable low-frequency vocalizations.

The researchers studied whales in the wild as well as a sei whale, humpback whale, and minke whale that had died, enabling a level of analysis that “has never been done before,” lead study author Coen Elemans told CNN. They used computer models to simulate baleen whales’ larynxes and discovered a “novel” structure not found in any other animal.

Elemans said this solves a mystery “for a whole group of really iconic animals.” He added: “They’re like the biggest animals that ever roamed this planet. They’re super intelligent, they’re very vocal, they’re very social. And for those animals, we now figured out how they’ve been able so successfully to communicate with each other on the water. And this evolved probably like 40 million years ago and has allowed the whales today to be successful.” [Hear them sing.](#)

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Dragon's Child



As the early morning light filters its way down into the shallow depths where this little creature lives amongst weeds and rocks, the male is on the lookout for its mate. Hidden from prying eyes, the enigmatic, almost shy seahorse looks out from its ocean hideaway assured that it's cryptic camouflage will hide it from even the most determined predator.

Coral Reef Image Bank; Yen-Yi Lee

By far the most unusual and enigmatic fish to live in the sea is the seahorse.

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

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Marlin Flash Bright Stripes Before a Deadly Strike



Divermagazine

Rapid color changes may prevent these predators from impaling one another during group attacks

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

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ASSP Releases Workplace Heat Stress Standards



mungfali.com

The standard provides guidance and training on acclimating to and protecting workers from high heat.

The American Society of Safety Professionals (ASSP) has published the first national voluntary consensus standard addressing heat stress for workers in construction and demolition operations.

ANSI/ASSP A10.50-2024, Heat Stress Management in Construction and Demolition Operations, offers guidance on protecting workers; explains how to acclimate workers to high heat conditions; and provides requirements for training employees and supervisors. The standard contains checklists and flowcharts designed to help companies develop clear and effective heat stress management programs that bridge the regulatory gap.

The A10.50 standard identifies engineering and administrative controls a company can implement to ensure that workers get proper rest, water breaks and shade while still meeting business needs. Recommendations such as medical monitoring and using a buddy system can reduce risks and help prevent heat-related illnesses in many work environments.

“This new industry consensus standard is an important development because there is no federal regulation focused on heat stress,” said Jim Thornton, ASSP president, CSP, CIH, FASSP, FAIHA. “Employers need expert guidance on how to manage heat-related risks. They must have the tools and resources to identify and help prevent work hazards before an incident occurs.”

[Read also: SJ&L Cited in Heat-Related Death](#)

“There are tens of thousands of heat-related illnesses each year linked to construction and demolition sites, and workers have died from exposures to excessive heat,” said John Johnson, CSP, chair of the ANSI/ASSP A10 standards committee. “This new standard outlines industry best practices and proven solutions to protect workers who commonly do strenuous jobs in challenging conditions.”

The impacts of heat stress can range from mild symptoms such as heat rash and heat cramps to severe conditions including heat exhaustion and heat stroke, which can be fatal. According to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, more than 400 work-related deaths have been caused by environmental heat exposure since 2011. The standard includes a detailed emergency response plan if a worker has a severe reaction to excessive heat.

The A10.50 subcommittee that wrote the standard consisted of 30 safety and health experts from businesses, trade unions, consulting firms, universities and government agencies. The inclusive process took three years.

Voluntary consensus standards provide the latest expert guidance and fill gaps where federal standards don't exist. Companies rely on them to drive improvement, injury prevention and sustainability. With government regulations being slow to change and often out of date, federal compliance is not sufficient to protect workers.

Source: [American Society of Safety Professionals](#)

By Harlee Hewitt for Construction Equipment

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How to Build Your Own First Aid Kit

You can put together a smarter, cheaper, and more comprehensive medical kit than the ones the stores will sell you.



Dennis Vakhrushev Getty Images

You Can't Make sure you'll never have an accident at home, on the road, in the office, or in the great outdoors. All you can do is make sure you're prepared. Many commercial medical kits are bulky, overpriced, and lack a lot of useful gear. Build your own to take with you camping and hiking, keep handy in the trunk of your car, or store at the workplace or home.

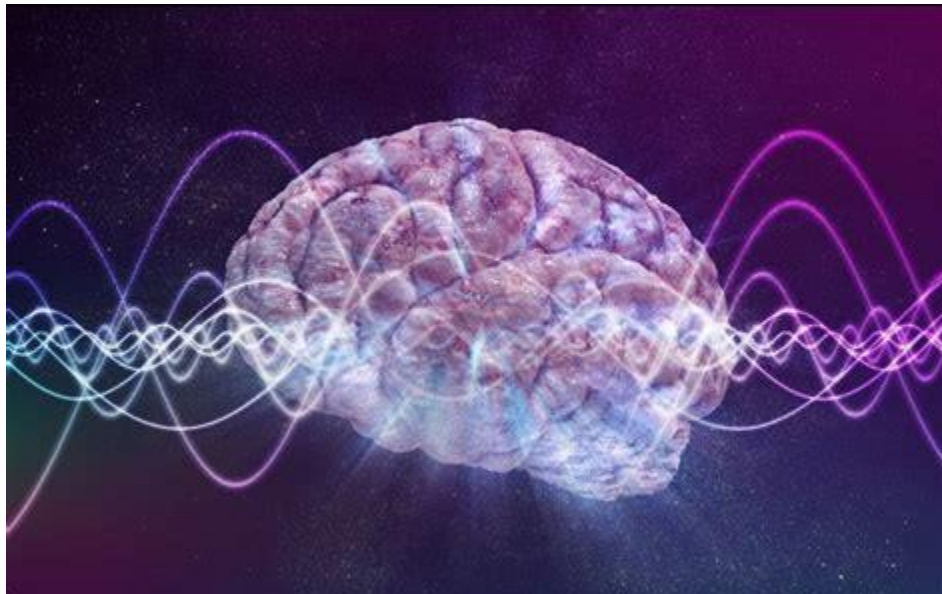
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The Symphony of the Brain



Scientific American

We can think of singers in a choir as neurons in the brain. Like these singers, neurons have to work together to create harmony, and once they do, the results are magnificent!"

In this video, Demi Brizee, a PhD student in the Medical Research Council Brain Network Dynamics Unit at the University of Oxford, introduces us to the fascinating

world of brain waves, and explains how a better understanding of them could lead to new therapies for neurological conditions.

<https://youtu.be/2YFHVyl8l1I?t=1>

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'Damning' FDA Inspection Report Undermines Positive Trial Results of Possible Alzheimer's Drug

Inspectors faulted trial sample analyses by Hoau-Yan Wang, academic partner of Cassava Sciences



thedailybeast.com

In September 2022, Food and Drug Administration (FDA) officials arrived at an imposing, glass-dominated research complex at the City University of New York (CUNY). They planned to review records and practices in a lab run by pharmacologist Hoau-Yan Wang, who had been involved in clinical tests for an experimental Alzheimer's drug. FDA staff found a litany of problems with that old work.

Wang, the inspectors noted, never performed routine calibration of his equipment or completed verification experiments to ensure the tests were "accurate, sensitive, and [conducted] with appropriate precision." And, they reported, he used improper statistical tests that "resulted in inaccurate determination of sample concentrations."

<https://bit.ly/3vgoPR1>

In a previous Ode I reported the apparent success of simufilam, developed by Wang's longtime collaborator Cassava Sciences. Now there's some concern that the tests were flawed. When ambiguities in the situation are cleared up, I'll report back.

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Why the New Alzheimer's Plaque-Attack Drugs Don't Work



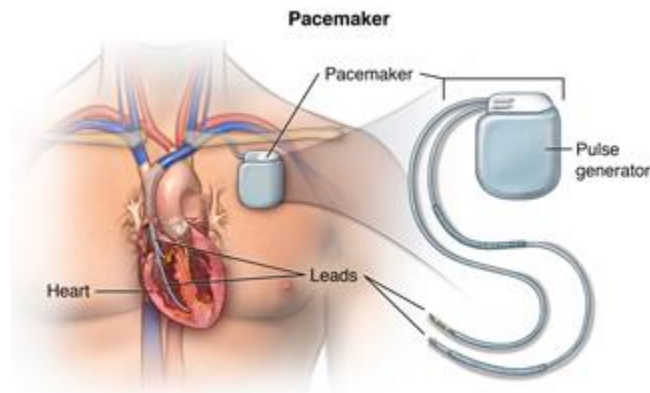
Bruce Goldman

On Jan. 31, aducanumab, a pricey drug approved for treatment of early-stage Alzheimer's disease, was withdrawn from the market. And in early March, the Food and Drug Administration delayed its decision regarding whether to approve a separate, closely similar drug. A prescient commentary by Stanford Medicine neurologist Mike Greicius, MD, in a peer-reviewed journal goes a long way toward explaining why.

<https://bit.ly/43j3Nxz>

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What's a Pacemaker and What Does it Do?



Johns Hopkins Medicine

Problems with the heart rhythm may cause difficulties because the heart is unable to pump an adequate amount of blood to the body. If the heart rate is too slow, the blood is pumped too slowly. If the heart rate is too fast or too irregular, the heart chambers are unable to fill up with enough blood to pump out with each beat. When the body does not receive enough blood, symptoms such as fatigue, dizziness, fainting, and/or chest pain may occur.

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Michael Davis Juggling on The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour



aichetron

Step back in time with a classic performance as Michael Davis takes center stage on The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour. In this mesmerizing showcase, Davis unveils his unparalleled 'juggling' techniques that will leave you in awe. Watch as he seamlessly combines skill, humor, and showmanship to create a truly unforgettable experience. Join us for a trip down memory lane as we relive the magic of Michael Davis' captivating performance on one of the most iconic comedy shows in television history. Don't miss this chance to witness the artistry of a juggling maestro – it's a spectacle that transcends time and continues to amaze audiences to this day!

<https://youtu.be/DOW4aCI69bs>

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Meet the First American Woman to Sail Solo Around the World



@Colebraueroceanracing/ Instagram

After setting off from A Coruña, Spain, on Oct. 29, sailor Cole Brauer provided regular updates to her Instagram followers — now numbering nearly half a million — about her journey to circle the globe. Some posts were harrowing, such as the one in which she shared that rough seas had led to bruised ribs. Others, such as the one in which she shared that she had finally finished, were pure joy.

“So stoked! Thank you to everyone that came together and made this process possible,” Brauer wrote Thursday after landing back in A Coruña. At 29, she was the youngest and only woman in the group of sailors who set off on the Global Solo Challenge in October. And now, she holds the title of the first American woman to race nonstop around the world alone.

“I think that it takes a lot of strength to actually push and try to strive into this industry, and I really want women to understand that it’s possible,” she said on Today. Brauer added in another interview with NBC: “It would be amazing if there was just one other girl that saw me and said, ‘Oh, I can do that, too.’”

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Sikorsky Takes New Hybrid VTOL Design Public



Sikorsky

Sikorsky revealed plans to build, test and fly a large-scale hybrid-electric vertical takeoff and landing (VTOL) tilt-wing demonstrator. Dubbed HEX (for "hybrid-electric"), the project is expected to be the first of a series of large, next-gen VTOLs featuring varying degrees of electrification and advanced autonomy technology "for optionally-piloted flight," Sikorsky said in a statement.

The HEX program, part of Sikorsky's Innovations prototyping group founded in 2010, places a premium on achieving range figures in excess of 500 nautical miles, reducing the complexity of mechanical systems for greater safety and reliability, and minimizing maintenance costs. In cooperation with GE Aerospace, the Sikorsky program is now finalizing design of the hybrid-electric power systems test bed, equipped with a 600-kW electric motor. "The testbed is a first step to evaluate hover performance of the follow-on HEX demonstrator," Sikorsky said, "a 9,000-pound maximum gross weight aircraft with 1.2mW-class turbogenerator and associated power electronics."

Sikorsky president Paul Lemmo said, "Our HEX demonstrator program will provide valuable insights as we look to a future family of aircraft built to the scale and preferred configurations relevant to commercial and military customers."

By Mark Phelps for AVweb.



Daytime Naps May Help Slow Brain Shrinkage, Study Says



Gollykim/E+ Via Getty Images

Previous research on naps and brain health has produced mixed results, but a study published in the journal [Sleep Health](#) suggests short snoozes might help protect the brain against age-related shrinkage, which is associated with cognitive decline and neurodegenerative conditions like dementia.

<https://bit.ly/3v5Zjh8>

I'm a failure at napping, so I may be living proof of its thesis. Or maybe it's because I never considered the role of Mendelian Randomization in my shrunken brain.

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Don't Snooze on the Booming Business of Sleep Tourism

Everyone's tired these days.



jamesmagazine.it

One in three adults don't get enough sleep, and 50m-70m Americans have chronic sleep disorders.

And it's fueling a thriving sleep tourism industry, which is expected to grow by ~8% — more than \$400B — between 2023 and 2028.

Now, the hospitality industry is embracing sleep as the main event for tourists rather than an afterthought, per The New York Times.

- The Carillon Miami Wellness Resort has a Bryte bed — a ~\$6.3k AI-assisted mattress with smartphone connectivity — in each of its 150 rooms.
- The Beatrice in Rhode Island offers a Sleep Wellness package starting at \$419 a night that includes Therabody SmartGoggles, mocktails, and herbal teas.
- The Park Hyatt New York has five sleep suites with Bryte beds, starting at \$1k+ a night.

Hotels catering to better sleep isn't new — the Westin introduced the Heavenly Bed in 1999, and blackout curtains and white noise machines have become hotel staples — but it's reaching new heights.

Next-level sleep

Today's sleep tourism industry isn't just a couple of extra gadgets, it's a whole new way to travel.

Hotels are offering retreats and experiences dedicated to sleep:

- The Carillon has a five-treatment spa circuit promoting good sleep and a ~\$2.6k Sleep Well retreat.
- Canyon Ranch offers a five-night Mastering Sleep Retreat with doctors, dieticians, and spiritual providers; this year's is \$8.8k per person.
- Cocooning lets travelers tuck away into dark rooms void of screens or distractions. London's Beaumont hotel offers ROOM, a \$1.78k-per-night suite promising total relaxation.

Some hotel brands are even employing sleep experts to help guests snooze. The Mandarin Oriental is partnering with hypnotherapist and sleep concierge Malminder Gill, and Hyatt launched a Sleep at Hyatt program in Australia and New Zealand with its sleep ambassador Nancy H. Rothstein.

The trend isn't surprising given recent data — more people than ever are looking for R & R and "slow" travel.

Finally, a vacation where you don't come home in need of another vacation

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Handing the Surgeon's Scalpel to a Robot

After decades of merely assisting doctors, are sophisticated machines ready to take charge?



mrpranav.com

Robots have been found in the operating suite since the 1980s for things like holding a patient's limbs in place, and later for laparoscopic surgery, in which surgeons can use remote-controlled robot arms to operate on the human body through tiny holes instead of huge cuts. But for the most part these robots have been, in essence, just very fancy versions of the scalpels and forceps surgeons have been using for centuries — incredibly sophisticated, granted, and capable of operating with incredible precision, but still tools in the surgeon's hands. That is changing.

<https://bit.ly/43gHFE3>

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Doctors Are Using the Apple Vision Pro During Surgery



Photo: eXeX

A medical team at Cromwell Hospital in London strapped on the \$3,500 Apple Vision Pro during two spinal surgeries. Doctor's are calling the device a "game-changing" tool, beefing up Apple's claims that the headset has a future as a medical device.

Doctors weren't wearing the Vision Pro themselves, but a scrub nurse reportedly had the VR goggles on during preparations for the surgeries and during the procedures. The Vision Pro was used to view virtual screens imposed on the operating room to select tools and monitor surgery progress.

The software used by Cromwell Hospital was developed by eXeX, a company that builds AI-driven apps pitched at surgeons.

"Working with eXeX to use the Apple Vision Pro has made a huge difference to the way we deliver care to our patients," said Syed Aftab, one of the Cromwell surgeons who used the device, in a press release. "It's a real privilege to be the first team in the UK and Europe to use this software within surgery and I'm looking forward to seeing how this technology advances and the impact it can have across hospitals."

According to a recent press release from Apple, a company called Stryker is touting the "myMako" app for the Vision Pro, which helps doctors develop surgical plans for hip and knee replacements using 3D models and other tools. A variety of other companies and developers are harnessing the Vision Pro for medical training and education, with apps including Fundamental Surgery, CollaboratOR 3D, and Complete HeartX.

"With the unique capabilities of visionOS, healthcare developers are creating new apps that were not previously possible, transforming areas such as clinical education, surgical planning, training, medical imaging, behavioral health, and more," Apple wrote in its press release.

The first-of-their-kind Vision Pro-assisted surgeries play into a number of initiatives from Apple. The company is pitching the Vision Pro as an enterprise device for professionals from artists to accountants who can use the help of a few extra virtual reality screens. And across Apple's various products, there's a huge push into health care, though until now, most of the related products and services were aimed at consumers, such as the Apple Watch's heart-tracking abilities or the iPhone's sleep features.

Thomas Germain for Gizmodo

Auxiliary roles such as these or perhaps providing checklist support make sense.



Pilot-Seat Blunder Led to Latam Mid-Air Plunge, WSJ Reports



msn.com

A mishap with a cockpit seat may have thrust the pilot into the controls of a Boeing Co. 787 plane flying to New Zealand this week, triggering the sudden plunge that injured 50 passengers, the Wall Street Journal reported, citing US officials familiar with the investigation.

A flight attendant serving a meal on the Latam flight hit a switch on the seat, propelling the pilot forward and pushing down the aircraft's nose, the newspaper said. According to the report, the switch is fitted with a cover and isn't meant to be pressed if a person is in the seat.

The plane was on its way to Auckland from Sydney on Monday when it suddenly lost altitude. Multiple media reports have described how the incident sent passengers, including at least one baby, flying into the ceiling of the cabin. While no one was seriously injured, seven passengers and three crew members were taken to the hospital after the flight landed in Auckland.

Boeing told the WSJ that it's in contact with Latam Airlines Group SA and is on hand to help the investigation. The US planemaker may issue a memo about the seat switch to airlines flying the popular 787 Dreamliner, the newspaper said.

Latam has described the mid-air plunge as a "technical event during the flight, which caused a strong movement."

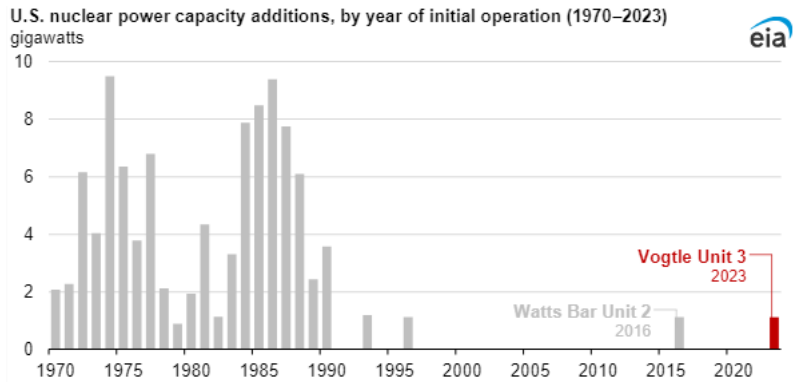
Two investigators from Chile's civil aviation agency arrived in New Zealand on Wednesday to lead the probe, the WSJ said. The newspaper cited US industry officials who had been briefed on initial evidence.

By Angus Whitley for Bloomberg

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The Political Sabotage of Nuclear Power

Abundant, emissions-free energy was once the promise of a nuclear-powered future. What happened?



U.S. Energy Information Administration, *Preliminary Monthly Electric Generator Inventory, and Georgia Power press release*

The economics of nuclear power are undoubtedly challenging, but its advocates say that's primarily because of its thorny politics. The headache of building a new power plant is vividly exemplified by Georgia's Plant Vogtle. The first U.S. reactor built from scratch since 1974, the project turned into a nightmare scenario: It took almost 17 years from when the first permit was filed for construction to begin, it cost more than \$28 billion, and it bankrupted the developer in the process.

<https://bit.ly/43kXg5F>

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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.

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Poetry Corner

William Butler Yeats (1865-1939): Irish Author and Poet



weeklytimesnow.com.au

Yeats' first publication, two brief lyrics, appeared in the *Dublin University Review* in 1885. When the family moved back to London in 1887, Yeats took up the life of a professional writer. He joined the Theosophical Society, whose mysticism appealed to him because it was a form of imaginative life far removed from the workaday world. The age of science was repellent to Yeats; he was a visionary, and he insisted upon surrounding himself with poetic images. He began a study of the prophetic books of William Blake, and this enterprise brought him into contact with other visionary traditions, such as the Platonic, the Neoplatonic, the Swedenborgian, and the alchemical.

In 1917 Yeats published *The Wild Swans at Coole*. From then onward he reached and maintained the height of his achievement—a renewal of inspiration and a perfecting of technique that are almost without parallel in the history of English poetry.

Adam's Curse

That beautiful mild woman, your close friend,
And you and I, and talked of poetry.
I said, 'A line will take us hours maybe;
Yet if it does not seem a moment's thought,
Our stitching and unstitching has been naught.
Better go down upon your marrow-bones
And scrub a kitchen pavement, or break stones
Like an old pauper, in all kinds of weather;
For to articulate sweet sounds together
Is to work harder than all these, and yet
Be thought an idler by the noisy set
Of bankers, schoolmasters, and clergymen
The martyrs call the world.'

And thereupon
That beautiful mild woman for whose sake
There's many a one shall find out all heartache
On finding that her voice is sweet and low
Replied, 'To be born woman is to know—
Although they do not talk of it at school—
That we must labour to be beautiful.'
I said, 'It's certain there is no fine thing
Since Adam's fall but needs much labouring.
There have been lovers who thought love should be
So much compounded of high courtesy
That they would sigh and quote with learned looks
Precedents out of beautiful old books;
Yet now it seems an idle trade enough.'

We sat grown quiet at the name of love;
We saw the last embers of daylight die,
And in the trembling blue-green of the sky
A moon, worn as if it had been a shell
Washed by time's waters as they rose and fell
About the stars and broke in days and years.

I had a thought for no one's but your ears:
That you were beautiful, and that I strove
To love you in the old high way of love;
That it had all seemed happy, and yet we'd grown
As weary-hearted as that hollow moon.

The Cap and Bells

The jester walked in the garden:
The garden had fallen still;
He bade his soul rise upward
And stand on her window-sill.

It rose in a straight blue garment,
When owls began to call:
It had grown wise-tongued by thinking
Of a quiet and light footfall;

But the young queen would not listen;
She rose in her pale night-gown;
She drew in the heavy casement
And pushed the latches down.

He bade his heart go to her,
When the owls called out no more;
In a red and quivering garment
It sang to her through the door.

It had grown sweet-tongued by dreaming
Of a flutter of flower-like hair;
But she took up her fan from the table
And waved it off on the air.

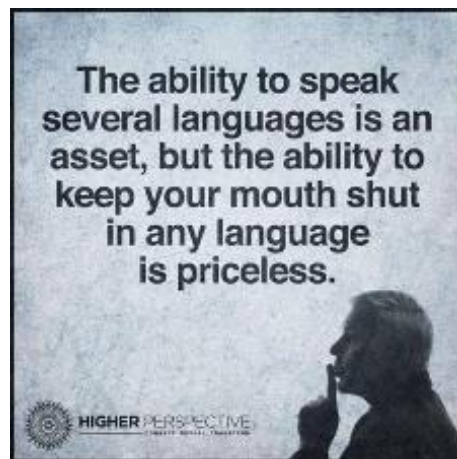
'I have cap and bells,' he pondered,
'I will send them to her and die';
And when the morning whitened
He left them where she went by.

She laid them upon her bosom,
Under a cloud of her hair,
And her red lips sang them a love-song
Till stars grew out of the air.

She opened her door and her window,
And the heart and the soul came through,
To her right hand came the red one,
To her left hand came the blue.

They set up a noise like crickets,
A chattering wise and sweet,
And her hair was a folded flower
And the quiet of love in her feet.

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The Modern Jazz Quartet



iheart.com

Modern Jazz Quartet (MJQ), American musical ensemble noted for delicate percussion sonorities, innovations in jazz forms, and consistently high performance standards sustained over a long career. For most of its existence the group was composed of Milt Jackson, vibes; John Lewis, piano; Percy Leroy Heath, bass; and Connie Kay, drums.

Jackson, Lewis, and drummer Kenny Clarke were pioneer bop musicians who had played together in the 1948 Dizzy Gillespie big band and pursued separate careers before adding Heath to form the Modern Jazz Quartet in 1952. Its early career was distinguished by introducing Lewis compositions such as "Django" and "Concorde." Clarke's departure in 1955 resulted in a loss of some of the group's rhythmic energy; his replacement was Kay, whose playing helped place the interplay of Jackson and Lewis in the foreground. Jackson, whose dynamic sensitivity and technical mastery brought a rare expressive quality to his instrument, was a virtuoso of melody, rhythmic detail, and swing. Lewis accompanied him not with the customary harmonic punctuations but rather with riffs (repeated melodic patterns) and melodic variations in a rhythmically simplified style that resulted in unique extended counterpoint; Heath, an uncommonly melodic bassist, and Kay accompanied.

Lewis's interest in baroque forms led him to compose fugues for the MJQ, and his classical-music-inspired works such as *The Comedy* (1962) and the film score *No Sun in Venice* (1957) are among the group's successes. Popular and jazz standards and Jackson's compositions were also part of its repertoire; in the 1980s it played, less successfully, arrangements of Duke Ellington compositions. In its album *Third Stream*

Music (1957) the MJQ is joined by a string quartet and others in extended works by jazz and classical composers.

Its members also pursued separate careers during periods when the MJQ was not performing together, and in 1974 it disbanded. It began reuniting for annual tours in the 1980s. Following Kay's death in 1994, Albert ("Tootie") Heath, brother of Percy, became the MJQ's drummer.

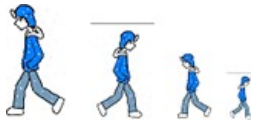
Summer Time <https://youtu.be/ZnFgpgX9QDQ?t=2>

Round Midnight <https://youtu.be/1M-QtVkkJZA>

Pyramid <https://youtu.be/CULVoG7HAGY?t=2>

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My Walking Thoughts



For Sunday March 17 2024

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Trip to Terra Incognita: Saufley Field, January 1960

Meeting My Mentor

I awoke to find myself synching to a rumble whose cadence offered messages drummed from another world.

Ca-Chung...Ca Chung...Ticky-Tick...Ca-Chung!..... Ca-Chung...Ca Chung...Ticky-Tick...Ca-Chung, the sounds coming from just outside my BOQ window. It was a flight of round-motored T-28s taxiing to the head of runway 32 on their way for takeoff-and-landing practice in preparation for student carrier qualifications aboard the USS Antietam.

That'll be me in several months, I thought, reveling that I was embarked on the journey that had held me in its thrall since my World War Two childhood. But first there was groundschool on the T-34B Mentor, the Navy's primary trainer based on Beechcraft Aircraft's 3-tailed Bonanza.

Today was a familiarization lecture and walk-around led by a Navy Lt. Commander who acted as if he had a control stick shoved up...uh...well you get the idea. This was the first of an increasingly deepening series of dives into the care, feeding, and operation of

the T-34B proceeding from arcane theory to the most intimate details of each component right down to the types and nomenclature of the nuts, bolts, pulleys, and cables that knitted themselves into a machine that should take us up and down again with some semblance of assurance.

As we got closer to the fateful day of our first flight, I and my classmates were in the evening likely found seated in uncomfortable chairs with dummy sticks, throttles, and cockpit dash panels, mumbling such strange incantations as "*Chop...prop...one-ten drop*," while wiggling faux controls in the process. The mantra in this case had to do with preparations for landing such as chopping the throttle, pushing the prop control to max rpm, and decelerating to 110 knots of airspeed to extend the landing gear.

"*Om Tare Tuttare Ture Soha*." Enlightenment? Damn right.

Just when it seemed the day would never come, we were ordered to the Flight Equipment barn to draw flight suits, boots, gloves, helmets, fur-lined leather flight jackets, and genuine aviator sunglasses. Then we were herded out to the flightline and paraded one-by-one to a waiting T-34 where we assumed our most killer fighter pilot pose so a photographer could memorialize the occasion for our families and hometown newspapers. I could just imagine how thrilled the City Editor of the *LA Times* would be to get one of those.

Finally, the time to meet our flight instructor was at hand and I along with two other students was sent over to a chunky Navy Lieutenant named Fentriss...Jim I think but 2nd Lieutenants weren't encouraged to call their seniors by their first name in those days. Today I'll call him Jim and not worry about facing a captain's mast.

So, Jim asked if any of us three had flown before. I had and even soloed...but illegally, taught by a non-instructor-rated pilot on a fallow farm field, so I allowed as I had 'been in the air' and liked it.

"Get sick," he asked. I shook my head. "Good," he opined, turning to the others, one of whom—an Annapolis grad—had some serious flight time in his father's private plane.

"Today I'll take each of you up for about an hour to give you a feel for the controls and help you learn some landmarks around the flying area, OK?" With that he waved for us to follow him to a bird sitting at the far end of a row. "Watch while I show you what to look for on a preflight inspection."

The three of us followed along like good puppies while he wiggled this, tugged at that, all the while keeping up a running dialog of what was in his mind. Returning to his starting point he turned and asked, "Who's first?"

Screw the boat school guy I decided, "I'm ready."

"Climb aboard, jarhead," he said perhaps a little caustically, "Let me watch you strap in." A minute later he thumped into the rear cockpit and called to make sure the intercom was working.

I tried to keep us with things as he fired up, wiggled the controls to the plane captain's signals, and before I was ready called ground control for permission to taxi. The done he added enough power to put our bird—Two Sierra 123—in motion.

"Set your altimeter to zero feet and align your compass," he ordered. As I did he shoved the throttle forward to the firewall for takeoff. almost instantly we were airborne.

It wasn't until about halfway through the flight I sensed I had sort of caught up with things. He had me practice straight and level flight for a while then shallow turns, steep turns, some climbs-and-descents before saying, "I've got it." I got off the controls and had just begun to relax when Jim yanked back on the stick and took us through a shuddering loop, followed by a whole host of gut-wrenching maneuvers through which I struggled to remain oriented. Thankfully my breakfast remained where it belonged.

"You've got it," he said, shaking the stick. "Take us back to the base and I'll show you the most screwed up landing pattern ever devised. Master it and your success is assured."

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Next week, getting ready to solo.

With that in mind, I know that a lot of you are pilots—some military others civilian-- and can recall with wonder what it was like to solo. So how about doing me (and yourself) a favor and write something up of your experience...what it meant to you then and now; how it changed you and your vision of life...etc.

My guess is it ranks among the grandest, most fulfilling moments of your life, so rekindle the dream and remind yourself, your family, and others (us) about it. Ok?

Get to it now so I can include it in the March 31st Ode.

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