

## Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday June 1 2025



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### Milky Way over Maunakea



Have you ever seen the band of our Milky Way Galaxy? In a clear sky from a dark location at the right time, a faint band of light becomes visible across the sky.

Soon after your eyes become dark adapted, you might spot the band for the first time. It may then become obvious. Then spectacular.

One reason for your growing astonishment might be the realization that this fuzzy swath, the Milky Way, contains billions of stars. Visible in the featured image, high above in the night sky, the band of the Milky Way Galaxy arcs. Also visible are the colorful clouds of Rho Ophiuchi on the right, and the red and circular Zeta Ophiuchi nebula near the top center.

Taken in late February from Maunakea, Hawaii, USA, the foreground telescope is the University of Hawaii's 2.2-Meter Telescope. Fortunately, you don't need to be near the top of a Hawaiian volcano to see the Milky Way.

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## Chords & Riffs

### Myrle Haggard (1937-2016)

*Originally a troubled youngster who served time in San Quentin prison, Merle Haggard grew to become a country music legend.*



*CBS Photo Archive//Getty Images*

Merle Haggard was born on April 6, 1937, near Bakersfield, California. The son of a railroad worker, Haggard lived with his family in a box car that they had converted into their home. As a child, he was plagued by a respiratory condition, which frequently kept him out of school and confined to bed rest.

In 1958 Haggard was sent to San Quentin prison after being convicted for burglary and attempted escape from county jail. While serving a 2 1/2-year term, he played in the prison's country band and took high school

equivalency courses. (Haggard would later be officially pardoned in 1972 by then governor of California Ronald Reagan.)

In 1960, Haggard returned to Bakersfield, where he sang and played guitar in the honky-tonks of "Beer Can Hill," the hub of the city's burgeoning country music scene, whose grittier sound stood in contrast to the softer and safer country music coming out of Nashville.

In 1965 Haggard formed his own backing band, the Strangers, before signing with Capitol Records, and later that year, the band released their debut self-titled album. Their follow-up album, *Swinging Doors*, reached No. 1 on the country charts the following year, and in 1967 their single "I'm a Lonesome Fugitive" did the same. Later that year, Haggard doubled down on their runaway success with "Branded Man," his first self-penned No. 1 song.

Haggard was elected to the Songwriters' Hall of Fame in 1977. In 1994, his wealth of artistic achievements, including 38 No. 1 hits, earned him an induction into the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Haggard died at home on his Northern California Ranch on April 6, 2016, his 79th birthday.

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Are the good times really over <https://youtu.be/sIKUkcNeZfQ>

Sing Me Back Home <https://youtu.be/u6evsqCwwzc?t=27>

Mama Tried [https://youtu.be/loT\\_pYzi3Vw](https://youtu.be/loT_pYzi3Vw)

Misery & Gin <https://youtu.be/J60F0x7C2FQ>

The Fightin' Side of Me <https://youtu.be/uIxBmyRQlwQ>

Listening to the Wind <https://youtu.be/WWJNqLY9bzM>

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## Webb Finds Planet-Forming Disks Lived Longer in Early Universe



*A JWST image of NGC 346, a massive star cluster in the Small Magellanic Cloud, a dwarf galaxy that is one of the Milky Way's nearest neighbors. With its relative lack of elements heavier than hydrogen and helium, the NGC 346 cluster serves as a nearby proxy for studying stellar environments with similar conditions in the early, distant universe. Ten, small, yellow circles overlaid on the image indicate the positions of the ten stars surveyed in this study.*

*Credits: NASA, ESA, CSA, STScI, Olivia C. Jones (UK ATC), Guido De Marchi (ESTEC), Margaret Meixner (USRA)*

In 2003, Hubble provided [evidence](#) of a massive planet around a very old star, almost as old as the universe. Such stars possess only small amounts of heavier elements that are the building blocks of planets. This implied that some planet formation happened when our universe was very young, and those planets had time to form and grow big inside their primordial disks, even bigger than Jupiter. But how? This was puzzling.

To answer this question, researchers used Webb to [study stars in a nearby galaxy](#) that, much like the early universe, lacks large amounts of heavy elements. They found that not only do some stars there have planet-forming disks, but that those disks are longer-lived than those seen around young stars in our Milky Way galaxy.

“With Webb, we have a really strong confirmation of what we saw with Hubble, and we must rethink how we model planet formation and early evolution in the young universe,” said study leader Guido De Marchi of the European Space Research and Technology Centre in Noordwijk, Netherlands.

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## FLASHMOB CENTRAL

### Flash Mob at the Bank of America Building, NYC—a Reunion

*Remember last week's Flash Mob? Here they are ten years later*

### Rome 22 Luglio Flashmob: Waltz of the Flowers



youtube

<https://youtu.be/o1mXFz22ww?t=170>

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My girlfriend left a note on  
the fridge:

"It's not working. I can't  
take it anymore. I am going  
to my Mom's place."

I opened the fridge.  
The light came on.  
The beer was cold...  
What the hell is she talking  
about?

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## DNA Research Confirms Pueblo Peoples' Ties To Chaco Canyon Site

*New genetic research confirms what the oral traditions of the Picuris Pueblo people of New Mexico have long described — that they're related to the Indigenous people of Chaco Canyon.*



*The Pueblo Bonito site at Chaco Canyon. Ancient DNA from several people buried here centuries ago confirms that they're related to the Picuris Pueblo people in New Mexico.*  
(Image credit: Margaret Osborne)

A "groundbreaking" DNA analysis of a small Pueblo tribe in New Mexico supports what their oral tradition has long described — that they're related to ancestral people who lived on their land, as well as to Indigenous people who lived a few hundreds miles away at Chaco Canyon.

The new research is the first DNA evidence that the federally recognized tribe, known as Picuris Pueblo, has ancestral ties to Chacoans buried at Chaco Culture National Historical Park, a [UNESCO World Heritage Site](#) and a place many Southwest Indigenous peoples consider sacred.

"We've always said we have this deep connection to Chaco Canyon," study co-author Craig Quanchello, the lieutenant governor of Picuris Pueblo, said at a news conference on April 29. "It not only runs through our veins, but now through science."

A study, whose results were published April 30 in the journal [Nature](#), researchers analyzed ancient DNA from 16 individuals buried in Picuris Pueblo dated to between 500 and 700 years ago,

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

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## Science Misinformation

*A new report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine provides a comprehensive assessment of the literature on science misinformation, its origins and impact, and strategies for mitigating its spread and potential harms.*



*National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine*

Over the last decade, concerns about the spread of misinformation about science and the role of scientific expertise in civic dialogue have grown significantly. The committee's review of the evidence found that misinformation can lead people to hold misbeliefs with potentially negative consequences such as ill-informed personal choices for themselves or their communities; exacerbate existing harms within historically marginalized communities; distort public opinion in ways that limit productive debate on dealing with natural disasters and public health emergencies; and diminish trust in institutions, which is important to a healthy democracy.

While misinformation about science can originate from wide-ranging sources — such as corporations, governments and politicians, alternative health and science industries, entertainment media, news media, nongovernmental organizations, science organizations, individual scientists and medical professionals, and ordinary citizens — its influence varies, says the report. For example, science misinformation is more influential when it reaches large audiences, such as on search engines and social media. The report says search engines and social media platforms should foreground evidence-based science information that is clear and easy to understand for different audiences, working closely with nonprofit, nonpartisan professional science societies and organizations to identify such information.

To provide clarity and to focus its analysis, the committee that wrote the report defined misinformation about science as “information that asserts or implies claims that are inconsistent with the weight of accepted scientific evidence at the time (reflecting both

quality and quantity of evidence).” Claims that are determined to be misinformation about science can evolve over time as new evidence accumulates and scientific knowledge advances. Moreover, the committee considered disinformation about science to be a subcategory of misinformation that is spread by agents who are aware they are circulating false information.

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## **Images from the 2025 GDT Nature Photographer of the Year Awards**

*A curious lion cub, a brave wolf spider, and a frolicking fox.*



*"Red fox in heathland"*

*Credit: Angelika Krikava / GDT Nature Photographer of the Year 2025*



More than 8,000 images were submitted for consideration at this year's awards. Visit GDTfoto for a full gallery of the winners and scroll some of our favorites below.

<https://bit.ly/44rsDy4>

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## These Are the Rules of King Cobra Fight Club

*A new study offers the first detailed look at king cobra combat. Video evidence reveals that when these snakes joust there is no venom—just a ritualized fight for mating rights.*



*King cobras (like this *Ophiophagus hannah* in Vietnam) are known to fight over mates, but the first scientific analysis of their behavior suggests that the fights involve surprisingly little cannibalism or venom.*

*YouTube*

The braided motions of two cobra males twisting around each other is so hypnotic that if you didn't know better, you might think it was an intimate mating ritual—and

in a way it is.

The 12-foot-long males will wrap around each other for up to half an hour in a highly ritualized struggle to push their opponent's face into the dirt with an ignominious thud. Presumably, the snakes spar over access to females. The crazy thing isn't so much that they fight, but that these well-known snake eaters and occasional cannibals loaded with toxic venom don't choose the most violent path to victory. Instead, the serpents engage in a highly ritualized contest whose rules are implicitly understood by the combatants.

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## Amazon Develops Robot That 'Feels' Touch

*The company insists that its new Vulcan robot will be used 'alongside' existing warehouse workers.*



*Vulcan's force-sensitive arm can apply just the right amount of pressure to avoid causing damage.*

*Image: Amazon*

Amazon has announced a new AI-infused warehouse robot that it says has a sense of touch. This allows the Vulcan robot to pick and stow roughly three-quarters of the items stocked in the company's warehouses, a task that was previously handled predominantly by human workers.

Vulcan uses an arm that Amazon says "resembles a ruler stuck onto a hair straightener" to rearrange any items already in a compartment and add new ones, with force sensors that help it know when it makes contact with an object and how much force and speed to use to avoid causing damage. A second arm includes a suction cup to grab anything it wants to take out of the pods, with an AI-powered camera to make sure that it hasn't picked up multiple items by mistake.

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## How Dairy Robots Are Changing Work for Cows (and Farmers)

*Everyone's happier when robots handle milking, feeding, and ear scratching*



*Robots are taking over much of the daily manual labor at dairy farms, including milking, feeding, cleaning, and more. It makes dairy farmers' lives easier, and makes the cows happier, too.*  
*Evan Ackerman*

"I wonder where the farmer is," remarks my guide, Jan Jacobs. Jacobs doesn't seem especially worried, though—the several hundred cows in this barn are being well cared for by a

small fleet of fully autonomous robots, and the farmer might not be back for hours. The robots will let him know if anything goes wrong.

At one of the milking robots, several cows are lined up, nose to tail, politely waiting their turn. The cows can get milked by robot whenever they like, which typically means more frequently than the twice a day at a traditional dairy farm. Not only is getting milked more often more comfortable for the cows, cows also produce about 10 percent more milk when the milking schedule is completely up to them.

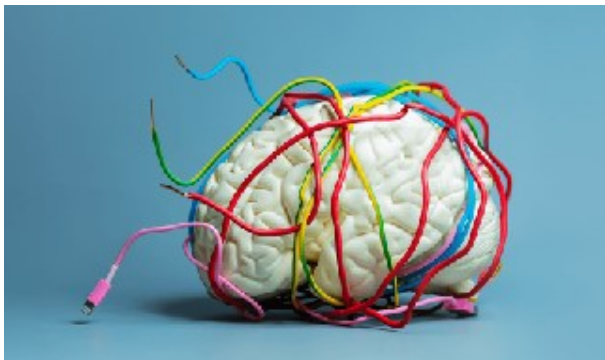
"There's a direct correlation between stress and milk production," Jacobs says. "Which is nice, because robots make cows happier and therefore, they give more milk, which helps us sell more robots."

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## How Curiosity Rewires Your Brain for Change

*Curiosity is often considered a personality quirk. Neuroscience paints a different picture.*



*Credit: Sergey Novikov / Adobe Stock / Big Think*

Curiosity is often treated as a personality quirk — something childlike and playful, maybe even optional. But neuroscience paints a different picture. When we're curious, the brain's dopaminergic system — the same one that lights up when we anticipate a reward — kicks into gear. Simply put, curiosity makes us feel good about the prospect of discovering something new.

It also helps us learn more efficiently, enhancing hippocampal activity and boosting our capacity to form and retain new memories. Studies show that when people are curious about a topic, they not only remember the specific information they were interested in but also retain unrelated material better.

Perhaps most importantly, curiosity promotes neuroplasticity, the brain's ability to rewire itself in response to new experiences. This makes it an ideal cognitive state for those inevitable moments of change when we need to break established neural patterns and form new connections.

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## Earliest Reptile Footprints



*thevintagenews.com*

Scientists have discovered the [oldest recorded reptile-like footprints](#), a study revealed yesterday. The fossilized claw tracks near Melbourne, Australia, date back 354 million to 358 million years. They suggest animals evolved the ability to walk on land much earlier than previously thought.

Animals emerged from the ocean roughly 400 million years ago. Amniotes—ancestors to modern birds, reptiles, and mammals—emerged at some point afterward, with claws (and later, feet and nails) enabling them to live on hard land.

The Australian discovery hastens the timeline and location of this evolutionary jump; the earliest clawed tracks beforehand were discovered in Canada, dating back 318 million years. This latest discovery suggests the jump to land living happened in the ancient southern continent of Gondwana ([more, w/video](#)).

The reptile-like creature likely measured 2.5 feet long, with long toes and hooked claws, resembling a monitor lizard. Trackways suggest the animal scampered in light rainfall before two others ran the opposite way. See more here ([w/video](#)).

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## Wild Chimpanzees Give First Aid to Each Other

*A long-term study in Uganda offers glimpses at the origins of human medicine*



*Chimps give each other bug band aids.*  
*scimex.org*

For wounded chimpanzees, help sometimes comes in the form of first aid — care rendered not by humans but by other chimps.

New research reveals the nature and prevalence of these rarely witnessed events. Thirty years of observations in Uganda's Budongo Forest reveal that chimp-administered health care — both ape-to-ape care and self-care — happens frequently there, say primatologist Elodie Freymann of the University of Oxford and colleagues. She suspects these behaviors, occasionally glimpsed outside of Budongo, are widespread among chimp  
Chimps' healing ways also hint at the possible origins of a similar impulse in humans.

From the 1990s through 2022, 34 [incidents of self-care](#) were recorded at Budongo, Freymann and colleagues report May 14 in *Frontiers in Ecology and Evolution*. Some



were hygienic acts, like wiping with leaves after bowel movements or mating. Several others resembled first aid applied after attacks by other chimps, or being caught in human-laid snares. Licking wounds and dabbing them with leaves were the most observed acts of self-care. Some saliva and plants contain antimicrobial compounds that might prevent infection, the researchers say.

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## Gene-Editing Breakthrough



*K.J. Muldoon, an infant in Philadelphia, has been treated with a personalized Crispr gene-editing therapy for a rare and deadly disease.*

*Photo: Muldoon family*

A personalized gene-editing treatment [successfully treated an infant](#) with a rare genetic disease known as CPS1 deficiency, doctors announced yesterday. It marks the first time a patient of any age has been successfully treated via customized CRISPR gene editing.

While CRISPR—which typically acts as molecular scissors, deleting faulty genetic code ([see deep dive](#))—has been approved to treat diseases like sickle cell and beta-thalassemia, these are relatively common diseases. CPS1 deficiency, which blocks the liver's ability to process ammonia, affects around one in 1.3 million children and is linked to specific mutations in each patient. Doctors used an advanced form of CRISPR known as base editing, which acts more like a "spell check" for genes and is capable of replacing individual bases with the correct code ([watch explainer video](#)).

Researchers hope the demonstration can be extended to treat millions of patients with rare or otherwise unique diseases.

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## New 'Striking Blue' Species Discovered in the Amazon



*An "aquamarine" poison dart frog.*

*Image via Koch et al., 2025, PLOS One (CC-BY 4.0)*

In 2023, Evan Koch — a postdoctoral researcher at the National Museum of the Czech Republic — led a team through the Juruá River basin forests of Brazil on an expedition.

In their travels, they stumbled across a new species of *Ranitomeya* (a genus of poison dart frogs) that they dubbed “an Amazonian hidden gem.”

The color of the amphibian was so striking that the researchers decided to name it *Ranitomeya aquamarina*.

“The specific epithet ‘aquamarina’ is a Latin adjective that means ‘pale blue-green’, referring to the coloration of the dorsal-lateral stripes of the new species,” Koch explained in the research, which was published in the scientific journal [PLOS One](https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0288888).

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## The Remarkably Slow Speed of Thought

*New research confirms the human brain makes decisions at a leisurely rate.*



*illustrating the concept of the 10 bits/second speed limit of thought.*

*Image: J. Zheng.*

Marcus Meister, the Anne P. and Benjamin F. Biaggini Professor of Biological Sciences, was teaching his Caltech students how to apply concepts of information theory—a branch of mathematics used to define and quantify information—to different parts of the human nervous system. “The key substance that flows through the nervous system is information in the same way that the key substance flowing through the vascular system is blood,” he says. “Just as you can measure things about blood like volume, flow rate, and pressure, you can measure things about information, like the amounts and flow rates in different neural links.”

Suddenly, a question arose: Just how much information can flow through an entire human being? In this information age, it can feel like the mind is going a mile a minute, absorbing massive amounts of data and acting on it quickly. But Meister and Jieyu Zheng, a graduate student in neurobiology, found just the opposite: Despite how much stimulation bombards us at every moment, the human brain’s information processing maxes out at around 10 bits per second (bps). By comparison, a high-quality streaming rate for a YouTube video is roughly 8 million bps.

“By observing humans under conditions where they’re engaging in natural and fast-paced behavior, where they’re making decisions at a substantial rate and perhaps getting close to the 10-bits-per-second limit, one has a better chance of understanding why that part of the brain needs such a great amount of neural complexity,” Meister says. “And that’s what we’re trying to accomplish in our new research focus.”

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## **The Differences Between Ice Cream, Sorbet, Italian Ice, and Gelato**



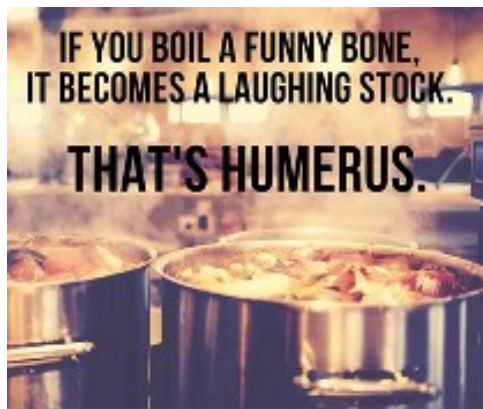
*Geovanna Rivera*

The earliest evidence of frozen dessert can be traced back to ancient China, where people consumed ice flavored with various syrups and extracts. During China's Tang period (which lasted from the early 600s to early 900s A.D.) the original purveyors of pseudo-ice cream heated buffalo, cow, and goat milk and fermented the stuff into a yogurt. Then, they would thicken it with flour, flavor it with wood extract, and chill it before serving. A few hundred years later, the practice made its way to Italy and morphed into sorbet and gelato.

That said, what are the actual differences between ice cream, gelato, sorbet, and Italian ice other than their origins? We're here to dish up the inside scoop — pun intended — on some of the most popular frozen desserts out there.

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## Younger Generations Find Fun and Connection in Book Clubs



*FilippoBacci/iStock*

If you think book clubs are boring, think again. What were once gatherings largely consisting of sitting in a circle and answering discussion questions have now become jumping off points for an array of social activities — all thanks to millennials and Gen Zers breathing new life into these classic clubs.

Book club events on Eventbrite increased by 31% in 2024 compared to 2023, according to the company.

This spike goes hand in hand with the younger generations' repopularization of physical



books, with a 2023 survey showing that both millennials and Gen Zers prefer to buy print books over e-books or audio. And while bonding over the written word is still the backbone of book club meetings, modern iterations also incorporate everything from themed food and drinks to workout classes and creative endeavors, like candle-making.

The clubs now serve as an opportunity to connect with others in person after years of pandemic loneliness and take a break from staring at screens. "Reading is such an escape," Allison Yates, founder of Chicago's Read and Run club, told NBC News. "But really what people want is to feel something deeply, and it slows us down a lot in a time when everything is digital and everything is fast-paced."

We'll also take this opportunity to shamelessly plug the [Nice News Book Club](#) — mark your calendars for the next meeting on May 6.

*Could this be true?*

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## **It's 1982 and the Blues Have Embarked on the A-4 Skyhawk Era**



*defensemedianetwork.com*

<https://youtu.be/h693FLkNtIM>

*The F-11 may have been prettier, the F-4 more frightening, but nothing in flight demonstration team performance will ever meet the absolute superiority of Heinemann's Hot Rod... nothing.*

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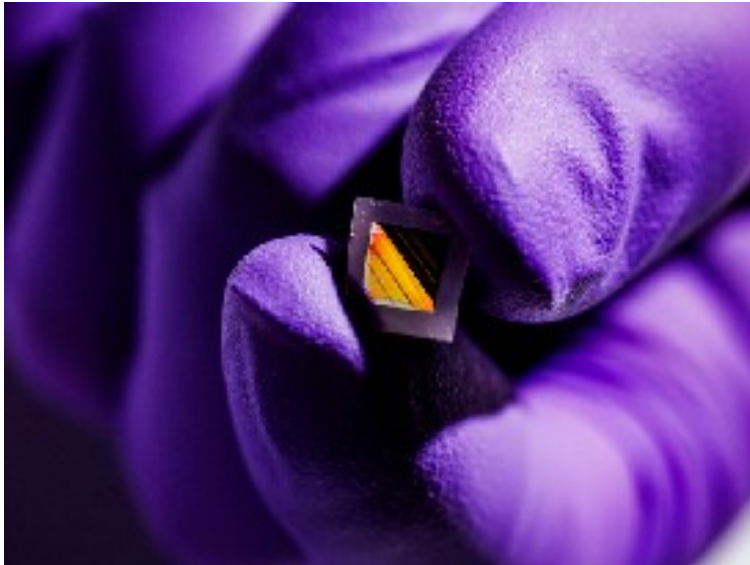
the correct place for the phone is below and slightly to the left of the bread plate



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## **New Electronic “Skin” for Lightweight Night-Vision Glasses?**

*MIT engineers developed ultrathin electronic films that sense heat and other signals, and could reduce the bulk of conventional goggles and scopes.*



*photo Adam Glanzman*

MIT engineers have developed a technique to grow and peel ultrathin “skins” of electronic material. The method could pave the way for new classes of electronic

devices, such as ultrathin wearable sensors, flexible transistors and computing elements, and highly sensitive and compact imaging devices.

As a demonstration, the team fabricated a thin membrane of pyroelectric material — a class of heat-sensing material that produces an electric current in response to changes in temperature. The thinner the pyroelectric material, the better it is at sensing subtle thermal variations.

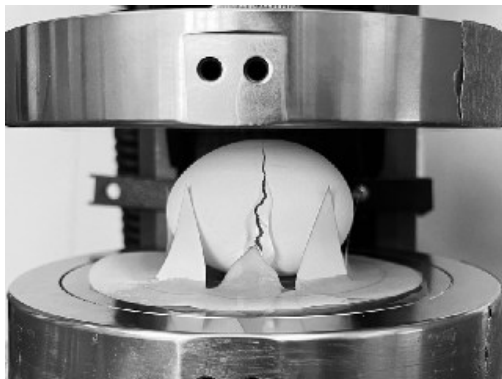
With their new method, the team fabricated the thinnest pyroelectric membrane yet, measuring 10 nanometers thick, and demonstrated that the film is highly sensitive to heat and radiation across the far-infrared spectrum.

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

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## MIT Engineering Students Crack Egg Dilemma

*A new study reveals why eggshells are stronger on their sides, overturning a popular science belief.*



*What the researchers found was it required the same amount of force to initiate a crack in both orientations. The horizontal egg compressed more under the same amount of force, meaning it was more compliant.  
Photo courtesy of the researchers*

It's been a scientific truth so universally acknowledged that it's taught in classrooms and repeated in pop-science videos: An egg is strongest when dropped vertically, on its ends. But when MIT engineers actually put this assumption to the test, they cracked open a surprising revelation.

Their experiments revealed that eggs dropped on their sides — not their tips — are far more resilient, thanks to a clever physics trick: Sideways eggs bend like shock absorbers, trading stiffness for superior energy absorption. Their open-access findings, published today in Communications Physics, don't just rewrite the rules of the classic egg drop challenge — they're a lesson in intellectual humility and curiosity. Even "settled" science can yield surprises when approached with rigor and an open mind.

<https://bit.ly/4lZwOr4>

*Ahh, but can the MIT folks determine which came first, the chicken or the egg?*

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## Will AI Allow Us to Talk to Animals?



*Do dolphins tell each other fin-tastic jokes? Advancements in artificial intelligence could help crack the animal code.*

*Alamy stock photo*

Do cuttlefish use sign language? What are dolphins saying when they whistle to each other? And could we one day eavesdrop on—and perhaps even participate in—these conversations?

That's the goal behind the [Dolittle prize](#), which aims to spur advances in the use of artificial intelligence to crack animal language. Last week, the Jeremy Collier Foundation, which oversees the prize (named after the fictional Dr. Dolittle, who could talk to animals), awarded \$100,000 to a team exploring how dolphins use shared, learned whistles that may carry specific meanings—possibly even warning each other about danger, or just expressing confusion. Other contending teams—working with marmosets, cuttlefish, and nightingales—are also pushing the boundaries of what human-animal communication might look like. The prize marks an important milestone in the Collier Dolittle Challenge, a 5-year competition offering up to \$10 million to the first team that can achieve genuine two-way communication with animals.

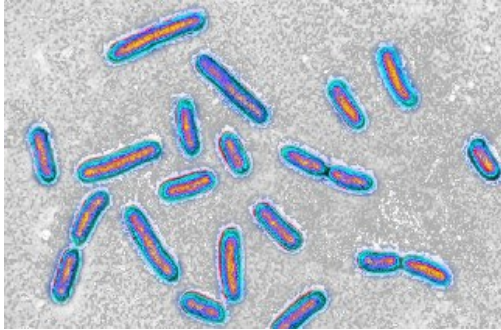
Science caught up with the four finalists to hear how close we really are to cracking the animal code. Here's one of our favorite excerpts, from the dolphin team: "Male [dolphins] form pairs and call each other's [signature] whistles if they get separated. But once, we were just testing our equipment and played one of those whistles while the pair was still together. They responded with a totally different whistle—one we hadn't documented before. We've since heard it in other confusing situations. We call it the 'WTF whistle,' because it really did seem like that's what they were asking."

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## Hospital Superbug Can Feed on Medical Plastic, Study Reveals

*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* is associated with 559,000 yearly deaths worldwide, and many of them come from hospital-acquired infections. A new study suggests it may be thriving in sterile environments by feeding on medical plastics.



*Pseudomonas aeruginosa* as seen underneath a microscope.  
(Image credit: James Cavallini/BSIP/Universal Images Group via Getty Images)

The bug is a bacteria species called *Pseudomonas aeruginosa*, which is commonly found in hospital environments and can cause potentially deadly infections in the lungs, urinary tract and blood.

Now, scientists have analyzed a strain of this bacteria from a hospital patient's wound, which revealed a surprising trick that could enable it to persist on surfaces and in patients for longer — its ability to break down the biodegradable plastics used in stints, sutures and implants. The researchers published their findings May 7 in the journal [Cell Reports](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cell.2016.05.011).

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

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## Shape Shifting Octopus Found in Canyon Off WA Coast



(Image: Cindy Bessey, CSIRO)

A new species of flapjack octopus, with massive eyes and blood-red tentacles, has been discovered from a deep-sea canyon off the coast of Australia.

The new species has been named *Opisthoteuthis carnarvonensis*, or the Carnarvon Flapjack Octopus, for the location in which it was found at a depth of 1044 to 1510m.

There are approximately 50 described species of dumbo octopuses worldwide, with 15 species recorded from Australian waters.

It's referred to as a deep-sea shape shifter with the ability to flatten its body to resemble a pancake – or flapjack, hence its name – or to pull itself up to look like a tiny gelatinous umbrella.

Their large eyes relative to their body size, enhance their ability to detect prey in the dimly lit depths in which they live. They eat worms and small crustaceans.

<https://bit.ly/3Fjx5Vm>

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## **NASA Legend Gene Kranz Returns to Mission Control**



*Legendary NASA flight director, Gene Kranz, now 91 years old, is seen posing with his lifetime achievement award from the American Astronautical Society at his restored console in Apollo mission control.*

*(Image credit: NASA)*

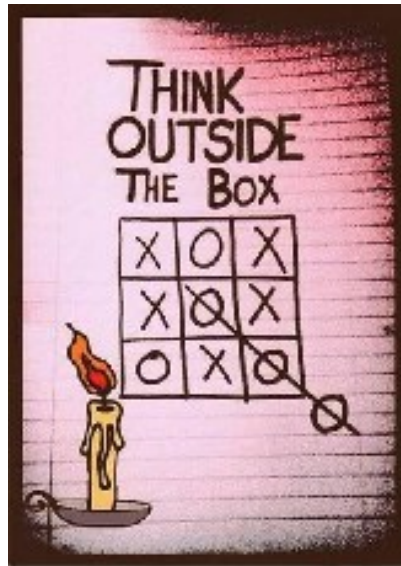
On May 15, 2025, Kranz received the 2024 American Astronautical Society (AAS) Lifetime Achievement Award for his "exemplary leadership and a 'must-never-fail' style that ensured historic mission successes, empowered human space exploration, saved lives and inspired individuals around the world."

The AAS lifetime achievement award is only presented once every ten years. Previous honorees have been Werner von Braun (1964), William Pickering (1974), George Low (1984), Norm Augustine (1994), Pete Aldrige (2004) and Ed Stone (2014).

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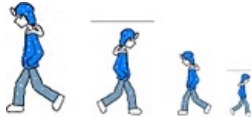


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## My Walking Thoughts



**For Sunday June 1 2025**

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## What Happened to HealthKit, the HiFi Legend that Vanished?

I snagged my foot on a vine this Friday, a regular feature on my walks through the undergrowth when I get off the main trails along the Ventura River bottom. In this case, the culprit was a matter of inattention brought about by the climactic volley of cannon fire, ringing chimes, and brass fanfare finale of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture, hardly a great choice for my verdant surroundings, but...

It wasn't the clamor in my ear buds that arrested my attention, rather long forgotten memories of the how I and my freshman roommate, Larry Templeton, brought the work to the attention of our dorm buddies.

The project was born of the realization that neither of us owned a radio nor any way to listen to our favored 'sounds,' a situation not unknown today, but Larry had an answer to the plight.

"What we need is a super-duper HiFi system," he announced, which presented the estimable challenge of cost. The leading exponent was the Magnivox Concert Grand, available for a measly \$795.00 in 1954 currency.

"No way," was my immediate response in recognition that a quarter's tuition, books, and incidentals came in for less.

"We'll build it ourselves," my stalwart roomie said in a calming voice, and that's where HealthKit came into our lives.

I won't go into how the brand's ware's and approach solved our problem other than to point out that it was Larry, armed with wire cutters, soldering iron, and steely concentration who brought the amplifier to life. After a final check he plugged it in, flipped the ON switch, the tubes (yeah, tubes) began to glow, and the only thing missing was sound, one of the requirements for which lay in the preamp I was building.

"Hurry up, you dork," was his suggestion, which I took as a command. However in this case, plugging in my magnum opus produced a loud screech and the cascade of exploding tubes, followed by dorm wide darkness.

Replacement parts arrived by mail a week later, time enough for Bob Lorenzini to finish the woofer-tweeter sound box. Then we were ready to rock and roll

As you may have guessed, our dormmates were rewarded with the dulcet strains of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture... 16 real cannon, carillon, and aural overload.

Here's the HealthKit Story [https://youtu.be/V-F\\_Fz2G7BI](https://youtu.be/V-F_Fz2G7BI)

1812 Overture <https://youtu.be/VbxgYlcNx8?t=3>

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