

Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday May 21 2023

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The Moon Through the Arc de Triomphe

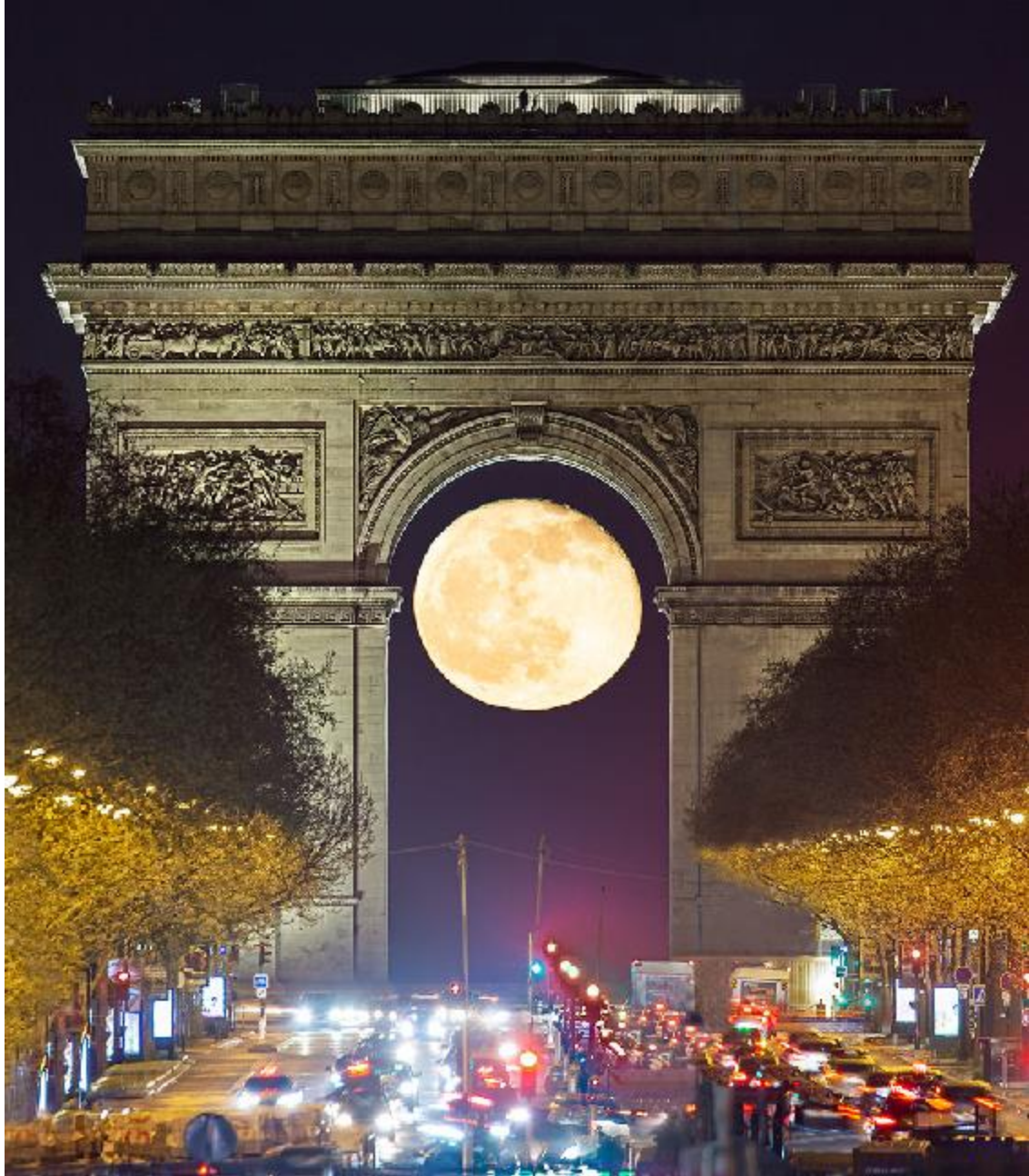


Image Credit & Copyright: Stefano Zanarello

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Paris Welcomes the Next Paralympic Games



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

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Wildflower 'Superbloom' Happening Across California



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

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Worms 'Explosively' Untangle Themselves from a Knotted Ball

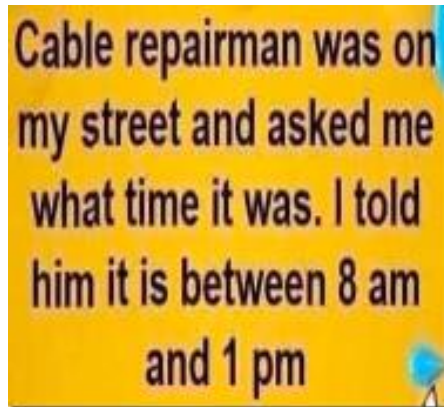
Researchers created a mathematical model showing how worms can untangle themselves from each other.



*California blackworms tightly tangle together to form a knotted blob.
(Image credit: Georgia Institute of Technology)*

<https://bit.ly/423hj6L>

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Don't Use Public Phone Charging Stations: FBI



winsenn.com

The FBI is warning people to not use public phone charging stations, which have become increasingly popular in places like airports and shopping malls.

The problem is that hackers have found a way to introduce malware and other software onto devices through the public stations, the FBI said.

“Avoid using free charging stations in airports, hotels or shopping centers,” the FBI’s Denver Twitter account said. “Bad actors have figured out ways to use public USB ports to introduce malware and monitoring software onto devices. Carry your own charger and USB cord and use an electrical outlet instead.”

The warning on social media mirrors guidance the bureau offers on its website.

The FBI’s Denver office told The Hill nothing prompted the warning on its social media and that it was simply a public service announcement.

The FBI is not alone in its warning to avoid the USB charging stations.

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) also warns against their use on its website, saying hackers are able to load malware onto the USB ports, giving them the ability to “maliciously” access devices. The agency calls it “juice jacking.”

“If your battery is running low, be aware that juicing up your electronic device at free USB port charging stations, such as those found near airport gates, in hotels and other

travel-friendly locations, could have unfortunate consequences," the FCC said. "You could become a victim of 'juice jacking,' a new cyber-theft tactic."

The FCC warns that such malware can give criminals access to personal data and passwords, which they can use personally or sell to other actors.

Instead of using the public USB charging stations, the FCC suggests people use a portable charger, use an AC power outlet or buy a charging-only cable, which does not allow the transfer of information while being used.

By Stephen Neukam for The Hill-

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The Emu Thang



Australian Emu

Australia is the name of a country and her continent.

The Opera House in Sydney is
Her architectural monument
To music for all the world to embrace
When visiting what is called
The Down Under Place.

Significant to Australia is the Great Barrier Reef,
A dry climate and pastures with lots of sheep.
There are Aboriginal Australians, and oceanic people
Kangaroos, Koalas, Spiders and the Beetle.
The favorite, and the largest native bird
Is the Emu, whose booming is often heard
When courting and mating and creating a nest.

Emus are self-sufficient when put to the test.
Flightless, they flap their small wings and run
On long legs very fast, from danger or for fun.

This large bird's disposition is passively shy
Grounded while smaller birds are touching the sky.
The female Emu provides eggs, then flies away.
The Daddy Emu incubates, committing to stay,

Nurturing and parenting a large family
Protecting his brood from peril and calamity.
The Emu is awkwardly put together
A bulky backside of layered feather
Serves as anchor to a strong ropey neck
Attached is a head as Top of the Deck.
His long legs carry him in strides of 3 to 9 feet
And a top speed of 30 mph is hard to beat.
Funny looking but offering a pleasant disposition
The Emu is Australia's Proud Bird Patrician.

Francine Troy

I asked Francie to tell us her recipe, so here it is.

The Thang recipe comes from assorted directions in my head (imagination) -

It began with my concern for not trashing items not welcomed at our trash center -- like packing materials -- aluminum foil scraps - all the junk that is not recyclable.

Plus - I am a bird and animal lover and I read and study these subjects devotedly. Thus, I had a habit of wadding and crunching leftover aluminum foil - and I began pounding such into solid pieces - sculpting - shaping - originally for a DoDo Bird.

After I have the basic shape, I wrap it tightly with duct tape - I 'mummify' it. I cut pieces of packing material (sometimes called 'popcorn') - those Styrofoam pieces used in packing - glue this to the subject, filling out shape - I use various sizes in wire and make legs - beaks - covering same with 'popcorn' as needed, this done with 'hot' glue. Everything wrapped in duct tape. Puncture or drill holes for legs, wings, eyes, beaks, etc.

After I have the shape, I cover/paint with acrylic - smooth and cover the tape lining and fill-in the gaps and cracks - sometimes use modeling paste mixed with acrylic. I have a box of old costume jewelry and I break up the jewelry - use for eyes, noses. For whiskers and eyelashes, I use dental floss or tape. I cut up wire and use for claws. I go to Michael's and buy various sizes and shapes of artificial flowers and foliage. I cut up - tear up -pull apart these items - paint all as needed - use flower petals for wings - more hot glue -

Final stage is painting - acrylic - at least two coats - and last coat, gloss-varnish.

Recently, I have been using small wooden plaques for stands and stability decorated in same way – then glue the Thang to the plaque. Each Thang takes about a month in full creation.

Meanwhile - in my head - I create/write a verse to go with the Thang. Neither stands alone. A Thang is a partnership, creativity and verse. The verse, like the Thang, is original - all mine - Nothing plagiarized! I am very protective for my verse. I shoot a picture of the Thang, add the verse, create a card. And I love to share!!!!

he first I made - years ago - I sent to a friend in Baton Rouge - he was from Ponchatoula, Cajun-country. He called me and asked "What is that thang you sent me?" And I decided that was a good name for my creation - Thang.

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How to Fold a Shirt in Two Seconds

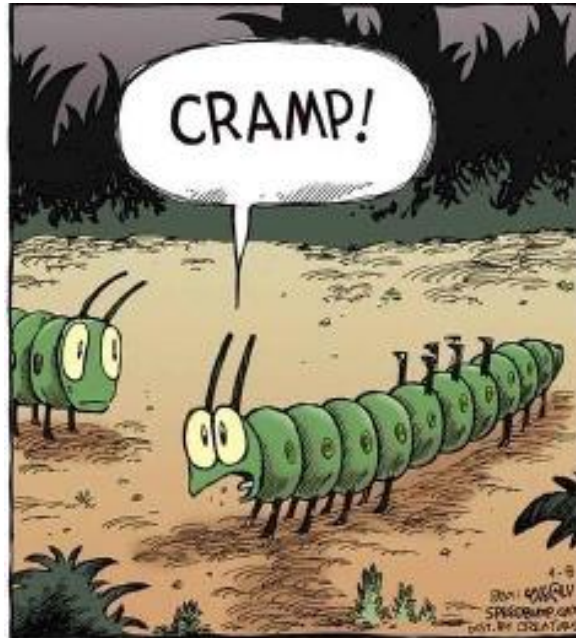


In this video, you'll learn the ultimate hack for folding a shirt in just 2 seconds! Say goodbye to tedious and time-consuming folding techniques. This method is simple, efficient, and will save you valuable time when doing laundry. Whether you're a busy

professional or just looking for ways to streamline your daily tasks, mastering this trick will make your life easier. So sit back, learn, and get ready to impress your friends and family with your newfound talent!

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

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Titanic: Full-Sized Scans Reveal Wreck as Never Seen Before



Atlantic Productions/Magellan

The first full-sized digital scan of the Titanic, which lies 3,800m (12,500ft) down in the Atlantic, has been created using deep-sea mapping.

The Titanic has been extensively explored since the wreck was discovered in 1985. But it's so huge that in the gloom of the deep, cameras can only ever show us tantalizing snapshots of the decaying ship - never the whole thing.

The new scan captures the wreck in its entirety, revealing a complete view of the Titanic. It lies in two parts, with the bow and the stern separated by about 800m (2,600ft). A huge debris field surrounds the broken vessel.

<https://www.bbc.com/news/science-environment-65602182>

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McDonald's Takeout Bags Turn into Outdoor Tables in Milan



<https://bit.ly/42hu2TN>

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Wendy's Drive-Through Orders to Be Taken by a Chatbot

Wendy's claims the AI is so good, 'you won't know you're talking to anybody but an employee.'



(Credit: Getty Images/Bloomberg)

Customers using Wendy's drive-through service won't be talking to a human employee for much longer—from June, a chatbot is set to take over.

As The Wall Street Journal reports, Wendy's opted to use Google's natural language software to train an AI capable of taking food orders. Wendy's chief executive Todd Penegor says the chatbot is so good, "you won't know you're talking to anybody but an employee."

Wendy's had to work closely with Google to fine tune its large language model to cope with the vast array of ways in which customers order food at the drive-through. The customizations required include "unique terms, phrases and acronyms." That way, any combination of food items can be handled, but so can common terms such as "biggie bags" or someone asking for a "JBC."

Thomas Kurian, CEO of Google Cloud, admits a drive-through AI is actually "a very complicated technical problem." However, Wendy's chatbot is expected to be very accomplished and can even handle a customer changing their mind halfway through ordering. On top of that, it will promote the daily specials and attempts to upsell customers in a bid to increase the size/range of food items ordered.

To begin with, the chatbot will be used at a company-owned restaurant in Columbus, Ohio starting in June. It's unclear if Wendy's will announce specifically when and where the chatbot starts work, but if it's as good as claimed, they probably won't see if anyone notices.

By Matthew Humphries for PC Mag

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Okay Odesters, Can Your Flock of Ostriches Do This?



<https://youtu.be/A4gtkY6AyDg>

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Voltage War Heats Up

Mustang Mach-E orders with lower prices and upgraded EPA range



Ford revealed Tuesday it's re-opening orders for its increasingly popular Mustang Mach-E. The American automaker is ramping production to cut wait times and reduce prices across the lineup.

Ford opens up Mustang Mach-E orders again

After a record year in 2022, Mustang Mach-E sales slipped in the first three months of 2023, selling just over 5,400 units, down 20% from Q1 2022.

The drop comes as Ford completed renovations at its plant in Mexico, where the Mustang Mach-E is produced, to prepare for a production ramp. Ford said earlier this year it was aiming to double the number of Mach-e built per hour in 2023 to hit a run rate of 210,000 by the end of the year.

Ford confirmed Tuesday it was re-opening orders for the Mustang Mach-E as it wraps up the upgrades to its plant.

The Mustang Mach-E features key upgrades including increased range on standard battery models to 250 EPA-estimated miles for RWD, and 226 miles for the eAWD model.

All standard Mustang Mach-E models will now be powered by lithium phosphate (LFP) batteries. The new batteries enable 45 additional horsepower on the eAWD model as well as improving range and charging times.

The Mustang Mach-E can now charge from 10% to 80% in 33 minutes, 5 minutes less than the previous models, with DC fast charging.

In addition, all Mustang Mach-E buyers will receive a complimentary 90-day trial for Ford's BlueCruise hands-free driving technology. The new BlueCruise 1.2 features hands-free lane changes simply by tapping the turn signal. The updated Mustang Mach-E prices are as follows.

| Mustang Mach-E model | Current MSRP | Updated MSRP | Difference |
|----------------------|--------------|--------------|------------|
| Select RWD Std Range | \$45,995 | \$42,995 | (\$3,000) |
| Select AWD Std Range | \$48,995 | \$45,995 | (\$3,000) |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|-----------|
| CA Route 1 AWD Ext Range | \$57,995 | \$56,995 | (\$1,000) |
| Premium RWD | \$50,995 | \$46,995 | (\$4,000) |
| Premium AWD Std Range | \$53,995 | \$49,995 | (\$4,000) |
| GT AWD Ext Range | \$63,995 | \$59,995 | (\$4,000) |

Updated Ford Mustang Mach-E prices (Source: Ford)

New offerings for the electric crossover SUV include an optional Comfort Package Lite with heated front seats, heated steering wheel, a memory driver seat, and sideview folding mirrors.

Mustang Mach-E buyers are eligible for a potential \$3,750 EV tax credit provided by the Inflation Reduction Act.

The new comes after Ford reopened orders for its F-150 Lightning electric truck in late March featuring higher prices than the previous models.

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Dylan Thomas; (1914-1953): Poet of the 20th Century



Metaphysical Times

Born in Swansea, Wales, Dylan Thomas is famous for his acutely lyrical and emotional poetry, as well as his turbulent personal life. The originality of his work makes categorization difficult. In his life he avoided becoming involved with literary groups or movements, and unlike other prominent writers of the 1930s—such as W.H. Auden and Stephen Spender, for example—he had little use for socialistic ideas in his art. Thomas can be seen as an extension into the 20th century of the general movement called Romanticism, particularly in its emphasis on imagination, emotion, intuition, spontaneity, and organic form. Considered to be one of the greatest Welsh poets of all time, Thomas is largely known for his imaginative use of language and vivid imagery in his poems.

The “Altarwise by owl-light” poems as well as “And death shall have no dominion” raise questions concerning the extent to which Dylan Thomas can be called a religious writer. In an essay for *A Casebook on Dylan Thomas*, W.S. Merwin was one of the first to deal with this issue; he found Thomas to be a religious writer because he was a “celebrator in the ritual sense: a maker and performer of a rite That which he celebrates is creation, and more particularly the human condition.” However, the positions on this issue can be—and have been—as various as the definitions of what constitutes a religious outlook.

At one end of the scale, critics do not dispute that Thomas used religious imagery in his poetry; at the other end, critics generally agree that, at least during certain periods of his creative life, Thomas’s vision was not that of any orthodox religious system. The range of interpretations was summarized by R.B. Kershner Jr., in *Dylan Thomas: The Poet and His Critics*: “He has been called a pagan, a mystic, and a humanistic agnostic;

his God has been identified with Nature, Sex, Love, Process, the Life Force, and with Thomas himself."

Especially When the October Wind

Especially when the October wind
With frosty fingers punishes my hair,
Caught by the crabbing sun I walk on fire
And cast a shadow crab upon the land,
By the sea's side, hearing the noise of birds,
Hearing the raven cough in winter sticks,
My busy heart who shudders as she talks
Sheds the syllabic blood and drains her words.

Shut, too, in a tower of words, I mark
On the horizon walking like the trees
The wordy shapes of women, and the rows
Of the star-gestured children in the park.
Some let me make you of the vowelled beeches,
Some of the oaken voices, from the roots
Of many a thorny shire tell you notes,
Some let me make you of the water's speeches.

Behind a pot of ferns the wagging clock
Tells me the hour's word, the neural meaning
Flies on the shafted disk, declaims the morning
And tells the windy weather in the cock.
Some let me make you of the meadow's signs;
The signal grass that tells me all I know
Breaks with the wormy winter through the eye.
Some let me tell you of the raven's sins.

Especially when the October wind
(Some let me make you of autumnal spells,
The spider-tongued, and the loud hill of Wales)
With fists of turnips punishes the land,
Some let me make you of the heartless words.
The heart is drained that, spelling in the scurry
Of chemic blood, warned of the coming fury.
By the sea's side hear the dark-vowelled birds.

I could go on with further examples of Thomas' genius, but I'll leave them for other Odes.

A teacher once told our class that Dylan Thomas was not a 'serious poet.' At the time I thought he was mistaken. Now in my dotage I find the years have added to my rejection of his stance.

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Here's a Quick Way to Explore Mars from Home

Click on one of the rovers and you are there.



Bisnow.com

<https://murray-lab.caltech.edu/CTX/V01/SceneView/MurrayLabCTXmosaic.html?ref=scopeofwork.net>

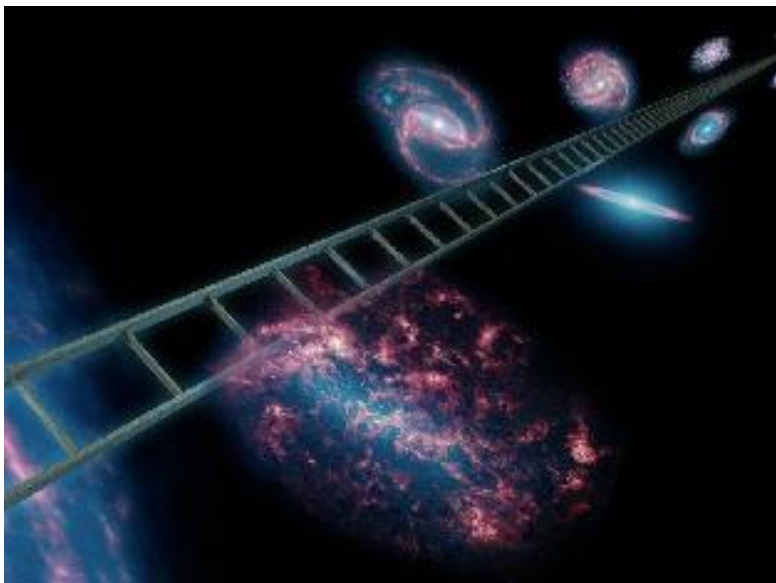
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'Hubble Constant' and the Rate of the Universe's Expansion

Physicists have improved the accuracy of a technique that uses variable stars to measure distances in the universe, providing a new figure for its expansion rate.



Scientists use a cosmic distance ladder to measure the expansion rate of the universe. The ladder, symbolically shown here, is a series of stars and other objects within galaxies that have known distances. By combining these distance measurements with the speeds at which objects

*are moving away from us, scientists can calculate that expansion rate.
(Image credit: NASA/JPL-Caltech)*

<http://bit.ly/3GvMv6u>

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Aaron Copland: Quiet City



Quiet City is a well-known composition for trumpet, cor anglais, and string orchestra by Aaron Copland.

In 1940, Copland wrote incidental music for the play Quiet City by Irwin Shaw. The next year he knitted some of it into a ten-minute composition designed to be performed independently of the play.

https://youtu.be/s_MxTZIYL14?t=1

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Mouse's Brain 64 Million Times Sharper Than in a Typical MRI

Researchers created a high-definition scan of a mouse's brain that is 64 million times sharper than a normal MRI.

A gif of an MRI brain scan of a mouse, showing connective pathways throughout the organ



This MRI shows horizontal the slices of a mouse's brain with the circuitry data moving up and down across the brain.

(Image credit: Duke Center for In Vivo Microscopy)

<https://bit.ly/3H3vY9T>

Scientists recently boosted the resolution of magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) to 64 million times higher than normal. They used the technique to take captivating, high-definition images of a mouse brain, showing the organ like never before.

While the swirly, psychedelic images are that of a rodent's brain, the research team thinks humans could be next to undergo one of these newly enhanced brain scans. The technology could help doctors detect changes to the human brain that occur due to neurodegenerative diseases, such as Alzheimer's disease, as well as changes linked to healthy aging.

The mouse scan was shared as part of a new paper published April 17 in the journal PNAS.

"It is something that is truly enabling," lead author G. Allan Johnson, a distinguished professor of radiology at Duke University, said in a statement. "We can start looking at neurodegenerative diseases in an entirely different way."

For four decades, Johnson, with the help of a revolving team of students and researchers from Duke University's Center for In Vivo Microscopy, has been working on improving MRI, which was invented by American physician Dr. Raymond Damadian 50 years ago.

MRI uses powerful magnets to generate magnetic fields, which cause the hydrogen atoms within water molecules in the body to align their "spins," or point in a specific direction. The machine then uses a pulse of radio waves to "flip" the atoms' spins. The

atoms then fall back into alignment, and each flip generates a radio signal that can be detected by the MRI scanner and used to make an image.

To improve upon this technology, researchers created a souped-up MRI outfitted with a high-powered 9.4-tesla magnet. (For comparison, most MRIs are equipped with a 1.5- to 3-tesla magnet.) They also added gradient coils that are 100 times stronger than current models and are what create the images, as well as a high-speed computer that is as powerful as approximately 800 laptops, according to the statement.

After scanning the mouse brain, the researchers sent tissue samples to be imaged using a technique called light sheet microscopy, which allowed them to label specific groups of cells in the brain that were then mapped onto the original MRI. These additional steps provided a colorful view of cells and circuits throughout the brain, according to the statement.

The researchers took one set of MRI images that captured how the mouse's brain-wide connectivity evolved with age. A second group of images showcased brilliantly colored brain connections that highlighted the deterioration of neural networks in a rodent model of Alzheimer's disease, according to the statement.

By studying mouse models of human diseases like Alzheimer's, researchers can better understand how these conditions emerge and progress in humans. The technique could also be useful for studying how the brain changes when mice are put on specific diets or given drugs in an effort to extend their life spans, Johnson said in the statement.

"The question is, is their brain still intact during this extended lifespan?" he said. "We have the capacity now to look at it. And as we do so, we can translate that directly into the human condition."

By Jennifer Nalewicki for Live Science

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EPA Set to Take on a Major Source of Carbon Pollution

A rule expected as soon as next week would limit greenhouse gases from power plants, less than a year after the Supreme Court hobbled the agency's powers.



The rules for coal-fired and natural gas plants represent the administration's latest attempt to set limits on the power sector.

John Bazemore/AP Images

<https://bit.ly/41MnyMI>

Is anyone else concerned about the administration's actions vis-à-vis carbon emissions?

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What Do Very Happy People Have in Common?

1. The Wall Street Journal followed up with the 12% of respondents in a WSJ-NORC survey who called themselves "very happy" and asked them what they were all about. Here are the traits they share.
2. Companionship: 67% of the happiest people said that marriage was very important to them, compared to 43% of overall respondents.
3. Religion: Two-thirds of very happy people characterized themselves as moderately or very religious. The overall share: less than half.
4. Closer to death: People 60 and over accounted for 44% of the happiest group, but represented 30% of total survey respondents.
5. Gym rats: Fitness was a common interest among very happy people.

*I would add the recognition that it's not up to me to change the world.
That said, I still think the world would be a better place if I were elected King.*

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How Does Astronomy Use the Electromagnetic Spectrum?



*Different wavelength of the electromagnetic spectrum reveal different aspects of the universe.
(Image credit: Space Telescope Science Institute)*

There is more to light than meets the eye, and it teaches us a lot about the universe.

<https://bit.ly/41Ikww>

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F-117 Nighthawks Flying Low Level Over Eastern California



*One of the two F-117s flying low over the Sierra Mountains on Apr. 21, 2023.
(Image credit: @stinkjet)*

<https://theaviationist.com/2023/04/25/incredible-footage-f-117s-flying-low-level/>

It appears that rumors of the Nighthawks death are a bit premature.

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Aerosmith to 'Peace Out' After 50 Years with Farewell Tour



The group announced Monday that they will have a 40-date North American tour, featuring special guests The Black Crowes.

"It's not goodbye it's PEACE OUT!," Aerosmith said in a joint statement. "Get ready and walk this way, you're going to get the best show of our lives."

Aerosmith recently wrapped their Las Vegas residency, "Aerosmith: Deuces Are Wild" at Dolby Live at Park MGM.

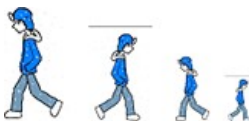
The new tour will be produced by Live Nation and will kick off in Philadelphia on September 2, with stops across the US and Canada, including the Kia Forum in Los Angeles, New York's Madison Square Garden, Austin's Moody Center, Seattle's Climate Pledge Arena, Chicago's United Center, Toronto's Scotiabank Arena, and more before wrapping in Montreal, QC at Bell Centre on January 26.

Livin' on the Edge <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7nqcl0mjMjw>

Cryin' <https://youtu.be/qfNmyxV2Ncw>

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My Walking Thoughts



For Sunday May 21 2023

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Do You Remember Where You Were January 29, 2014?

I do.

I was caught in the 36-hour lockdown at the Atlanta Hartsfield Airport, trapped in the terminal when the airport...the city... for all I know the entire Southeast was brought to a slithering halt because of a snowfall that almost anywhere else in the east would have been dismissed as a "light dusting."

But delay aside, my memory is forever locked on the event because for a day-and-a-half there was nowhere I or anyone else in the terminal could go to escape the nCNN news broadcasts that erupted non-stop from TV monitors placed every 60 or so feet throughout the hallways of the nation's busiest airport. If that wasn't enough, a good bit of the programming—the majority it seemed to me--was devoted to pillorying one of the presumptive presidential candidates even though the 2016 election was not to take place for another twenty-two months.

Luckily, in two years leading up to the 2020 election, I was left to my own devices, spared the brunt of the derisive drivel that most assuredly whistled back-and-forth with all the grace of a Connors/McEnroe hissy fit

But now the 2024 has raised its ugly head with salvos beginning last year and heating up now before it's even obvious who the candidates are going to be.

"Okay," you ask, "what's your point, John?"

Well, it's this: I don't think we need our ears battered and our heads polluted by rants from paid agents in order to know what's what in our neighborhood...in our town...in our country. That you and I might think differently about that *what's what* is fine with me...better if we've both thought the options through for ourselves, but...well...that's up to us.

As an antidote to the interminable politicking hogwash, I would suggest that in the 48 months between Presidential Elections we devote 47 of them to dealing with what's important to our nation and limit electioneering gobbledygook to the last four weeks before the polls open. I don't think it would change the outcomes an iota, but we'd all have a chance to enjoy our lives and each other's company a lot more.