Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday September 19 2021

# M51: The Whirlpool Galaxy

*Image Credit & Copyright: Josep Drudis*

Find the Big Dipper and follow the handle away from the dipper's bowl until you get to the last bright star. Then, just slide your telescope a little south and west and you'll come upon this stunning pair of interacting galaxies, the 51st entry in Charles Messier's famous catalog.

Perhaps the original spiral nebula, the large galaxy with well-defined spiral structure is also cataloged as NGC 5194. Its spiral arms and dust lanes clearly sweep in front of its companion galaxy (top), NGC 5195. The pair are about 31 million light-years distant and officially lie within the angular boundaries of the small constellation Canes Venatici.

Though M51 looks faint and fuzzy to the eye, deep images like this one reveal its striking colors and galactic tidal debris.

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## The 1,584: A Note from Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund


*"None of the kids I went to school with had Dads that were away. And we just never talked about it. We didn't talk about it at home - and we certainly didn't talk about it in public. I grew up feeling all alone like nobody understood and that my Dad had been forgotten."*
*Cindy Stonebraker, daughter of Kenneth A. Stonebraker, Panel W40, Line 51.*
*Unaccounted for since October 28, 1968*

Almost 50 years after the war's end, there are still 1,584 American service members listed as missing and unaccounted for from the Vietnam War – including Kenneth A. Stonebraker. His family is one of the thousands of families still waiting for the fullest possible accounting for their loved ones.

Two days ago–the third Friday in September--was National POW/MIA Recognition Day. The focus of the day is to ensure America remembers its responsibility to stand behind those who serve our nation and do everything possible to account for those who do not return. And on this day, we recognize these service members and their families' decades long search for answers.

*For some families, the answers have come. Rebecca Rusch, daughter of Stephen Rusch, Panel W2, Line 113, was able to bury her father's remains in 2007 after 35 years of waiting.*

Both of these stories need to be preserved for future generations so that the sacrifices of these heroes are never forgotten. Both Cindy and Rebecca told their stories as part of VVMF's Echoes of the Vietnam War podcast. Cindy tells about her journey from silence to advocacy. While Rebecca explains why she rode her bicycle 1,200 miles along

the Ho Chi Minh Trail through the jungles of Southeast Asia in search of her father's crash site.

www.vvmf.org/echoes

We hope you'll listen to their stories and make a promise to never forget them and the sacrifice they made for our country.

We hope that one day every American service member from the Vietnam War is accounted for but until then, we stand with their families in their search for answers.

Respectfully,

Jim Knotts
President and CEO
Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund

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*I am in the midst of writing a novel—Lord knows it's a tortuous path since I am a stranger to the world of fiction. Presently titled Phantoms from Vietnam, it deals with the MIA issue and the quest of a former POW to determine the fate of his RIO.*

*My plan is to have it finished and be searching for a publisher by the end of the year.*

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## Illinois Farmer on the Johnny Carson Show

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1t8-x3uOSqY

I really don't think you want to miss this.

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## What is the Oldest Shark?

By Cameron Duke for LiveScience

*How old do these sea monsters get?*

*Greenland sharks can live for hundreds of years.*
*(Image credit: Franco Banfi / Nature Picture Library / Alamy Stock Photo)*

Sharks are often called "living fossils," and for good reason: The first sharks appeared in the fossil record roughly 450 million years ago and have lived through all five mass extinctions, including the one that wiped out the nonavian dinosaurs. In addition to being long-lived as a group, individual sharks have long life spans. So just how long can sharks live, and what's the oldest shark on record?

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Djj3-jF19F8

On the lower end of the longevity scale, the great hammerhead shark (Sphyrna mokarran) lives about 44 years, although one individual caught by a fisher in Florida was estimated to be as old as 50. The great white shark (Carcharodon carcharias) can live up to 70 years, according to a 2014 study in the journal PLOS One.

But of all the shark species, one stands out for its mind-boggling longevity.

"The Greenland shark is the longest-lived shark species by far," Brynn Devine, a marine biologist at the University of Windsor in Ontario and an expert in Greenland shark conservation, told Live Science.

Greenland sharks (Somniosus microcephalus) scour the ocean floor in the North Atlantic and Arctic. These huge sharks, some the size of great whites, are truly remarkable.

"Greenland sharks are not just the oldest sharks," Devine said, "but they are possibly the oldest animals with backbones, which is crazy to think about."

In a 2016 study in the journal Science, researchers determined that the average age of a group of 28 Greenland sharks in their sample was 272 years old. The oldest in the group was estimated to be 392 years old, plus or minus about 120 years. That led to a

widely held — but now debunked — misconception that the oldest shark was 512 years old.

### To date an ancient shark

Typical aging methods didn't work for that 2016 study. "Aging is typically done by counting growth rings in calcified structures, like vertebrae or spines," which are laid down seasonally, like tree rings, Devine said. But those methods can be inaccurate if the shark doesn't grow at predictable rates throughout its life, so researchers usually check dating from this method against other evidence. Age estimates can be verified with mark-recapture studies, which involve tracking a population of animals over time.

"For Greenland sharks, conventional dating methods simply don't work," Devine said. Most deep-sea-shark skeletons don't calcify enough to produce usable growth rings, and these sharks lack the spines used for dating in other sharks. Even if scientists could determine ages from growth rings or spines, manually verifying the sharks' ages with annual mark-recapture studies is out of the question, given that Greenland sharks in any study will easily outlive a researcher's great-grandchildren.

Instead, researchers relied on radiocarbon dating to estimate the sharks' ages. For this, the researchers sampled tissue from the eye lenses, which form at birth, and determined each animal's age based on the ratios of carbon isotopes, or versions of the element, in their eyes. Because radiocarbon dating is rather imprecise, and the exact physics of how carbon behaves in a Greenland shark's body are not known, there is a large margin of error in the final estimates.

"Unfortunately, there aren't a lot of alternative techniques, so this is a major challenge in aging deep-sea sharks," Devine said.

Because researchers know so little about the Greenland shark's metabolism, it is unclear what enables them to live so long. One thing we do know, according to Devine, is that female Greenland sharks might not reach sexual maturity until 134 years old. To put that into perspective, the person widely considered to be the oldest human to have ever lived, Jeanne Calment, died at the age of 122, having outlived her own grandchildren. A Greenland shark born on the same day as Calment would still have been awaiting shark puberty when she died.

"They are truly remarkable deep-sea animals," Devine said.

*Originally published on Live Science.*

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## Visualizing the Gravitational Pull of the Planets

By Nicholas LePan

Gravity is one the basic forces in the universe. Every object out there exerts a gravitational influence on every other object, but to what degree?

The gravity of the sun keeps all the planets in orbit in our solar system. However, each planet, moon and asteroid have their own gravitational pull defined by their density, size, mass, and proximity to other celestial bodies.

Dr. James O'Donoghue, a Planetary Astronomer at JAXA (Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency) created an animation that simplifies this concept by animating the time it takes a ball to drop from 1,000 meters to the surface of each planet and the Earth's moon, assuming no air resistance, to better visualize the gravitational pull of the planets.

**Sink like a Stone or Float like a Feather**

Now, if you were hypothetically landing your spacecraft on a strange planet, you would want to know your rate of descent. Would you float like a feather or sink like a stone?

It is a planet's size, mass, and density that determines how strong its gravitational pull is, or, how quick or slow you will approach the surface.

| | Mass | Diameter | Density | Gravity | Esc V | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 1024 kg | Km | (kg/m3 | m/s2 | (km/s) | Mercury | 0.33 | 4,879 |
| | 5,427 | 3.7 | 4.3 | | | | | |
| Venus | 4.87 | 12,104 | 5,243 | 8.9 | 10.4 | | | |
| Earth | 5.97 | 12,756 | 5,514 | 9.8 | 11.2 | | | |
| Moon | 0.073 | 3,475 | 3,340 | 1.6 | 2.4 | | | |
| Mars | 0.642 | 6,792 | 3,933 | 3.7 | 5.0 | | | |
| Jupiter | 1,898 | 142,984 | 1,326 | 23.1 | 59.5 | | | |
| Saturn | 568 | 120,536 | 687 | 9.0 | 35.5 | | | |
| Uranus | 86.8 | 51,118 | 1,271 | 8.7 | 21.3 | | | |
| Neptune | 102 | 49,528 | 1,638 | 11.0 | 23.5 | | | |
| Pluto | 0.0146 | 2,370 | 2,095 | 0.7 | 1.3 | | | |

According to Dr. O'Donoghue, large planets have gravity comparable to smaller ones at the surface—for example, Uranus attracts the ball down slower than on Earth. This is because the relatively low average density of Uranus puts the actual surface of the planet far away from the majority of the planet's mass in the core.

Similarly, Mars is almost double the mass of Mercury, but you can see the surface gravity is actually the same which demonstrates that Mercury is much denser than Mars.

**Exploring the Outer Reaches: Gravity Assistance**

Knowing the pull of each of the planets can help propel space flight to the furthest extents of the solar system. The "gravity assist" flyby technique can add or subtract momentum to increase or decrease the energy of a spacecraft's orbit.

Generally it has been used in solar orbit, to increase a spacecraft's velocity and propel it outward in the solar system, much farther away from the sun than its launch vehicle would have been capable of doing, as in the journey of NASA's Voyager 2.

**Gravity Assist**

Launched in 1977, Voyager 2 flew by Jupiter for reconnaissance, and for a trajectory boost to Saturn. It then relied on a gravity assist from Saturn and then another from Uranus, propelling it to Neptune and beyond.

Despite the assistance, Voyager 2's journey still took over 20 years to reach the edge of the solar system. The potential for using the power of gravity is so much more…

**Tractor Beams, Shields, and Warp Drives…Oh My!**

Imagine disabling an enemy starship with a gravity beam and deflecting an incoming photon torpedo with gravity shields. It would be incredible and a sci-fi dream come true.

However, technology is still 42 years from the fictional date in Star Trek when mankind built the first warp engine, harnessing the power of gravity and unlocking the universe for discovery. There is still time!

Currently, the ALPHA Experiment at CERN is investigating whether it is possible to create some form of anti-gravitational field. This research could create a gravitational conductor shield to counteract the forces of gravity and allow the creation of a warp drive.

By better understanding the forces that keep us grounded on our planets, the sooner we will be able to escape these forces and feel the gravitational pull of the planets for ourselves.

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## The Wizard Was Woz…Still Is

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5WBX6SACViI

Steve Wozniak on the Early Days of Apple

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## Ukrainian Folklore

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o4Oai5nJ1Wo

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## Australian Musk Ducks Have the Ability to Call You a 'Bloody Fool

*A musk duck (not Ripper) pictured swimming.*
*(iStock)*

By Jennifer Hassan

Australian birds aren't exactly known for their use of "fowl" language, but thanks to a musk duck named Ripper and the discovery of a 35-year-old recording, that might be about to change.

Ripper's unexpected rise to fame came when Carel ten Cate, a professor of animal behavior at Leiden University in the Netherlands, began investigating the evolution of vocal learning among birds.

During his research he stumbled across a recording from the summer of 1987, which appeared to capture the male musk duck swearing repeatedly and mimicking the sound of a closing door.

The moment was a "special rediscovery," Cate said, explaining in an email to The Washington Post that the find was "pure coincidence." Cate contacted Peter J. Fullagar, the scientist who had recorded the talking bird, which was 4 years old at the time the audio file was created.

Their research, which was published Monday in the Royal Society scientific journal, indicates that captive musk ducks appear to have the ability to imitate human speech. In Ripper's case, the phrase he was captured repeating sounded exactly like "you bloody fool."

Vocal learning among most animals is an advanced trait and relatively rare, although some groups such as songbirds and parrots have demonstrated their ability to learn words from humans.

Cate described the discovery of vocal learning in a duck species "extra remarkable."

Although it is impossible to know for sure where the duck got the phrase from, it may have been language picked up from his caregiver, the report said.

Musk ducks form strong maternal relationships because the species reproduce in small numbers — which means mothers have more time to interact with their young.

This may explain why hand-reared musk ducks like Ripper, who was raised at Australia's Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve, form strong human connections with their caregivers and are more likely to mimic their behavior.

In the study, which took around two years to compile, researchers said that they had also received reports of two male musk ducks, raised in the United Kingdom, mimicking human noises they had been exposed to, including coughing sounds.

Musk ducks can only be found naturally in Australia and are known for their large, powerful builds and stiff black and brown feathers. Males have what experts describe as a "large bulbous lobe of skin," that dangles underneath their bill and inflates as they seek a mate.

Females have a smaller pocket of leathery skin that hangs underneath their bill and are smaller in stature.

The duck's name derives from the odor they emit when attempting to attract a mate.

"We never thought ducks were capable of this," Sean Dooley, public affairs manager at the conservation organization BirdLife Australia told The Post on Tuesday, adding that the findings came as a surprise.

"This was not on my bingo card," Dooley joked, but added if he had to pick a duck species to exhibit such a talent, it would be musk ducks, which he called "incredibly unique and charismatic."

When it comes to mating rituals, males put on an elaborate display — kicking and splashing the water while making loud whistling sounds during the day and night, according to BirdLife.

"They pull out all the stops," Dooley said of the ritual.

Cate said he hopes the research will inspire other scientists to analyze the ducks.

"There is still a lot more to examine on this species," he said.

And, while Ripper is no longer alive, his surprising story has brought joy and amusement to some in Australia, where citizens in Sydney, Canberra and Melbourne remain under lockdown restrictions amid outbreaks of the delta variant.

"As we enter week four of L4 lockdown, this is the kind of distraction I need. Brilliant," read one tweet, while Dooley said that many more people were paying attention to birds and the outside world as a result of the global health crisis.

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## How Mushroom Time Lapses are Filmed

https://youtu.be/5yq0_mqN97s

When was the lst time you thought about this? No rush, it took 15 years to film.

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# NASA Starts Testing Electric Air Taxi for 1st Time

By Tereza Pultarova for Space

*The helicopter's propellers were designed to reduce the noisiness associated with traditional rotorcraft.*


*Joby Aviation's all-electric vertical takeoff and landing has already performed over 1,000 test flights.*
*(Image credit: Joby Aviation)*

NASA has started testing a future air taxi that might soon be flying cargo and passengers in busy cities, helping to ease annoying traffic jams.

The all-electric vertical takeoff and landing (eVTOL) aircraft, designed by California startup Joby Aviation, is a helicopter powered by six rotors. It was designed to be as quiet as possible in order to fit into busy city life without disturbing residents.

During the two-week test campaign, which is part of the space agency's Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) National Campaign, NASA and Joby Aviation will fly the aircraft at Joby's Electric Flight Base near Big Sur, California. NASA engineers will focus especially on measuring the noise produced by the helicopter in order to gather data that would help lay a foundation for a future regulatory framework governing the use of such vehicles in cities.

"NASA's AAM National Campaign is critical to driving scientific understanding and public acceptance of eVTOL aircraft," Joby Aviation founder and CEO Joe Ben Bevirt said in a statement released by NASA. "We're incredibly proud to have worked closely with NASA on electric flight over the past 10 years and to be the first eVTOL company to fly as part of the campaign."

NASA engineers will use the Mobile Acoustics Facility, consisting of over 50 pressure ground-plate microphones arranged in a grid array, that will precisely measure sound emissions during different phases of the helicopter's flight. The teams will then use the data to compare the noisiness of Joby's eVTOL with conventional helicopters, drones and other aircraft to gauge how it would add to the background noise in urban areas.

"From day one, we prioritized building an aircraft that not only has an extremely low noise profile, but blends seamlessly into the natural environment," Bevirt said in a statement released by Joby. "We have always believed that a minimal acoustic footprint is key to making aviation a convenient part of everyday movement without compromising quality of life, and we're excited to fly with NASA, our longtime partners in electric flight, to demonstrate the acoustic profile of our aircraft."

*NASA's Advanced Air Mobility (AAM) National Campaign will help usher in the era of city air travel.*
*(Image credit: NASA)*

The blades of the aircraft's six rotors were carefully designed to minimize noise. The rotors can individually adjust their tilt, rotation speed and blade pitch during take-off and cruise to reduce the blade vortex that generates the typical sound associated with traditional helicopters.

"The National Campaign Developmental Testing is an important strategic step in NASA's goals to accelerate the AAM industry timeline," Davis Hackenberg, NASA AAM mission integration manager said in the NASA statement. "These testing scenarios will help inform gaps in current standards to benefit the industry's progress of integrating AAM vehicles into the airspace."

Joby's all-electric helicopter can cover a distance of up to 150 miles (240 kilometers) in one go, according to the Joby statement, and reach a speed of up to 200 mph (320 kph). The company, which was recently listed on the New York stock exchange, has been testing its full-scale prototypes since 2017 and has performed more than 1,000 test flights. Joby hopes to receive a certification from the U.S. Federal Aviation Administration in 2023 and start providing commercial passenger service by early 2024, the company said in the statement.

Joby's aircraft is the first to be tested as part of NASA's campaign, marking an important milestone toward a possible future that sees air taxis safely zoom through busy cities, fully integrated into the national airspace.

Follow Tereza Pultarova on Twitter @TerezaPultarova. Follow us on Twitter @Spacedotcom and on Facebook.

Join our Space Forums to keep talking space on the latest missions, night sky and more! And if you have a news tip, correction or comment, let us know at: community@space.com.

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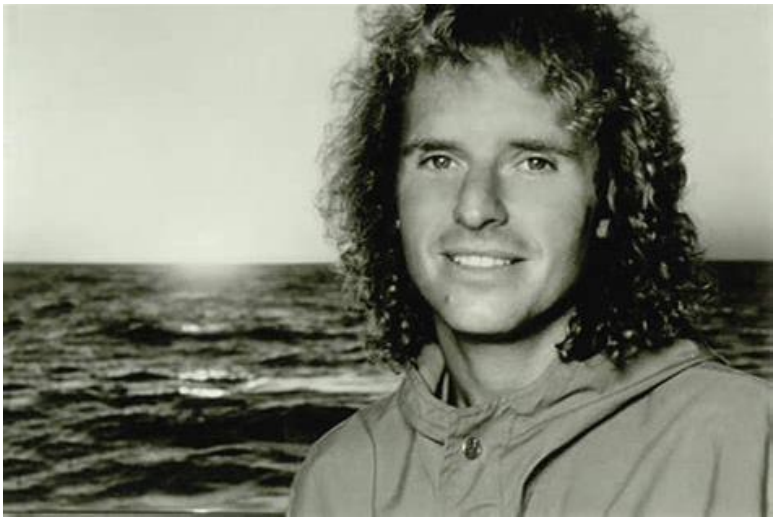
## Gary Wright



*napster*

No newcomer to the entertainment world, Gary Wright began his career in show business debuting on the Captain Video show in New York at the age of seven. He also made a living appearing in radio and television commercials before appearing in the play Fanny.

While in Europe, he met Englishman Mike Harrison, which led to the formation of the progressive/hard rock band Spooky Tooth. When the band temporarily disbanded in 1970, Wright became a solo artist and formed the band Wonderwheel.

He released the keyboard dominated Dream Weaver in 1975, which yielded two number-two singles in the title track and "Love is Alive". Today, Wright continues to perform both as a solo artist and as a sometime member of Ringo Starr's All-Stars.

Our Love is Alive https://youtu.be/wZqItCGY3Ns

Dream Weaver https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZKuzwPOefs

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## Caterpillar, Cummins Move on Hydrogen for Trains

*Caterpillar and Cummins are working separately to put hydrogen to work in locomotives.*

Caterpillar and Chevron have a collaboration agreement to develop hydrogen demonstration projects in transportation and stationary power applications, including prime power. The goal of the collaboration is to confirm the feasibility and performance of hydrogen for use as a commercially viable alternative to traditional fuels for line-haul rail and marine vessels, according to a joint press release from the companies. The collaboration also seeks to demonstrate hydrogen's use in prime power.

Linked to the collaboration, and facilitated by Progress Rail, a Caterpillar company, the parties also agreed to demonstrate a hydrogen-fueled locomotive and associated hydrogen-fueling infrastructure. Work on the rail demonstration will begin immediately at various locations across the United States.

"Through Chevron New Energies, Chevron is pursuing opportunities to create demand for hydrogen—and the technologies needed for its use—for the heavy-duty transportation and industrial sectors, in which carbon emissions are harder to abate," said Jeff Gustavson, president of Chevron New Energies, in a prepared statement. "Our collaboration with Caterpillar is another important step toward advancing a commercially viable hydrogen economy."

"As we work to provide customers with the capability to use their desired fuel type in their operations, collaborating with Chevron is a great opportunity to demonstrate the viability of hydrogen as a fuel source," said Joe Creed, Caterpillar group president of Energy & Transportation. "This agreement supports our commitment to investing in new products, technologies and services to help our customers achieve their climate-related objectives as they build a better, more sustainable world."

**Cummins powers French locomotives with Alstom**

Cummins is currently powering hydrogen trains in commercial operation. In 2016, Cummins partnered with customer Alstom, a French railway equipment manufacturer, to engineer, supply, and integrate the hydrogen fuel cell solution in its Coradia iLint trains. The trains entered commercial service in 2018 and can carry up to 150 seated passengers and 150 standing passengers. They will start operating later this year

through 2022 in Lower Saxony, and there is interest from other German federal states and other European countries to use the trains for non-electrified tracks.

Cummins lists five reasons why hydrogen has a place in the future of the railway industry.

1. Trains powered by hydrogen have zero emissions at the point of use. The power required for the train's systems is supplied via a fuel cell, which generates energy by combining the hydrogen stored on the train's roof with oxygen in the air. There are no emissions of carbon dioxide in this process. They are also efficient: fuel cells are up to three times more efficient than internal combustion engines.
2. Hydrogen trains can be deployed anywhere and retrofitted into existing trains and lines. The majority of lines across Europe and the U.S., particularly rural lines and lines with little consumer demand, are yet to be converted to carry electric trains. Hydrogen trains represent a cost-effective alternative that doesn't sacrifice efficiency or emissions. They can simply run on existing rail infrastructure without the high cost of adding electrification. Cummins fuel cell solutions are flexible and scalable in their configuration and can be customized to fit customers' needs optimally.
3. Hydrogen fuel cell trains have an exceptionally long range of up to 1000 kilometers at a maximum speed of 140km/h between refueling—ten times farther than battery powered electric trains. And refueling is quick: hydrogen powered trains can run for 18 or more hours after less than 20 minutes of refueling.
4. Fuel cells are cost effective and low maintenance. The total lifetime cost of ownership is already comparable for trains running on diesel or electrified lines, according to a report by consulting firm Roland Berger. There is a long asset life compared to electrification, and repairs are often as simple as swapping out one plug-in component for another.
5. Trains powered by hydrogen are quiet and comfortable. Hydrogen provides a smooth driving experience and emits low noise levels due to the exhaust being only steam and condensed water. This is especially important in urban areas where noise pollution is an issue.

*Sources: Cummins, Catepillar, Chevron*

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## Michelin's New Airless Tires Hit Public Streets for the First Time

*The concept is scheduled for market launch in 2024.*

Ameya Paleja

By Ameya Paleja

Puncture-proof tires have been an intriguing concept for many years. Tire maker, Michelin, has been working on it since 2005 and after more than a decade of work, it is now closer to reality. The company took its puncture-proof tires for a spin for the first time, on an electric vehicle, in line with the company's goals of being more sustainable in the future.

More than three billion tires are produced annually around the world. Once beyond their lifetime, these tires usually end up in landfills. They are also at risk of catching fire and releasing toxic fumes into the atmosphere. Like with other things manmade, one way of making tires more eco-friendly is to make them out of naturally occurring material. The second is to reduce instances that cause wear and tear and render the tires useless. French tire manufacturer, Michelin, is using both these approaches to make its tires more 'green' in the future.

Through its Vision Concept, the company wants to make tires that are airless, rechargeable, connected, and sustainable. The Unique Punctureproof TIre System (UPTIS) is the airless tire that, thanks, to its unique design, does not require air filling and, never gets punctured either.

The company released a teaser video in 2017 to help garner excitement for the work. You can see how they look in the video below.

https://youtu.be/Tyc4Apyk2Rc

According to its Concept note, UPTIS combines an aluminum wheel and has a flexible load-bearing structure which is made out of glass fiber reinforced plastic (GFRP). The company is confident that with this design, it can continue to deliver the performance of conventional Michelin tires.

The company recently took the Uptis out in public for the first time and even invited a limited number of people for the test drive.

"The truly distinctive structure of the MICHELIN Uptis prototype, or its 'weirdness' as we have often heard it called, really attracted the attention of many visitors and left a lasting impression on them," said Cyrille Roget, Michelin Group Technical and Scientific Communications Director. "It was an exceptional experience for us, and our greatest satisfaction came at the end of the demonstration when our passengers, who were admittedly a little wary at first, said they felt no difference compared with conventional

tires." While we do not know the price range of these tires yet, the company said they were on track for tires to reach the market by 2024.

During the initial phase, these tires will also contain recycled plastic waste; and over time, the company will replace 100 percent of the tire components with organic or recyclable materials.

This might really be the first time that man has 'reinvented the wheel.

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## Leroy Anderson and The amazing Typewriter Concerto

https://fb.watch/6Ys9OiItmu/

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## Carolina Panthers Debut Mixed-Reality Panther At Home Opener


https://youtu.be/_XhgfnwVTts?t=23

…and the Panthers won.

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## Oscar Screams Through the Carousel

Laguna Seca never had it so good.

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## Thank Goodness for Gummint Folks

A cowboy named Bud was overseeing his herd in a remote mountainous

pasture in California when suddenly a brand-new BMW advanced toward him out of a cloud of dust.

The driver, a young man in a Brioni suit, Gucci shoes, RayBan sunglasses and YSL tie, leaned out the window and asked the cowboy, "If I tell you exactly how many cows and calves you have in your herd, Will you give me a calf?"

Bud looks at the man, obviously a yuppie, then looks at his peacefully grazing herd and calmly answers, "Sure, Why not?"

The yuppie parks his car, whips out his Dell notebook computer, connects it to his Cingular RAZR V3 cell phone, and surfs to a NASA page on the Internet, where he calls up a GPS satellite to get an exact fix on his location which he then feeds to another NASA satellite that scans the area in an ultra-high-resolution photo.

The young man then opens the digital photo in Adobe Photoshop and exports it to an image processing facility in Hamburg, Germany .

Within seconds, he receives an email on his Palm Pilot that the imagehas been processed and the data stored. He then accesses an MS-SQL database through an ODBC connected Excel spreadsheet with email on his Blackberry and, after a few minutes, receives a response.

Finally, he prints out a full-color, 150-page report on hishi-tech, miniaturized HP LaserJet printer, turns to the cowboy and says, "You have exactly 1,586 cows and calves."

"That's right. Well, I guess you can take one of my calves," says Bud. He watches the young man select one of the animals and looks on with amusement as the young man stuffs it into the trunk of his car.

Then Bud says to the young man, "Hey, if I can tell you exactly what your business is, will you give me back my calf?"

The young man thinks about it for a second and then says, "Okay, why not?"

"You're a Congressman for the U.S. Government", says Bud.

"Wow! That's correct," says the yuppie, "but how did you guess that?"

"No guessing required." answered the cowboy. "You showed up here even though nobody called you; you want to get paid for an answer I already knew, to a question I never asked. You used millions of dollars-worth of equipment trying to show me how much smarter than me you are; and you don't know a thing about how working people make a living - or about cows, for that matter. This is a herd of sheep. ....

Now give me back my dog.

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Actually I met this guy back in 1980 in Ely NV while working for HDR Sciences on the USAF's MX Basing Mode Environmental Impact Analysis.

I had flown with a small team from the company and the Air Force there to meet with the head of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and a group of sheepherders to discuss the use of remote sensors from LANDSAT 3 to increase the AUMs (Animal Unit Months) on public lands.

The group assembled at the appointed hour, and the BLM boss, attired in brand new Levis tucked into brand new cowboy boots, bandana around the neck, and a Texas 20-

gallon hat, stepped forward with his best *I'm from the government s*mile, and announced that he was prepared to allow an extra 300 *eee wees* to be pastured on the Agency's 3 million acres of rangeland (Let's see, that's 1 *eee wee* per 2.6 square miles).

Sheepherders, as lean and humorless as any group of humans in the planet shifted from foot to foot, until someone asked, "Your honor, what are *eee wees*?"

Sadly, his honor was caught up short, having glanced at his briefing notes on the airplane enroute to Ely, but finally one of his aides whispered loud enough for everyone to hear, "Those are *ewes*, boss, female sheep."

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## There Are Mobs and then There Are MOBS

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vp7j3ji5U24

A crowd of 60,000 people randomly started singing 'Bohemian Rhapsody' at a Green Day concert in Emirates Stadium, London. While the crowd was waiting for Green Day to take the stage, the venue began to play 'Bohemian Rhapsody' through the stadium speakers. What happened next was nothing short of British. The loyalist crowd erupted in song, screaming Queen at the top of their lungs!

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## Flashmob Pops up at Beijing Capital International Airport

https://youtu.be/ZQRKilvN_z0

China Media Group and China Philharmonic Orchestra surprised passengers at the Beijing Capital International Airport with a flash mob performance.

## Another at the Shenzhen Railway Station

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=knpnBdqkLMw

Spring Festival: Surprise flash mob at a Shenzhen railway station

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## My Walking Thoughts

**September 19, 2021**

Weekend before last I went to the Ventura County Auto Show at the Fair Grounds unprepared for the magnitude of the turnout…both cars and attendees. Two things immediately stood out: Stromberg Carburetors are back in vogue, and there were more 1950 Mercuries on the premises than the company ever made. Actually, that leads to a third observation, Vic Barris never blessed as many with his genius than popped up all over the Fairgrounds.

In the good old days, you couldn't wait to replace Strombergs with quads coming from the factories that weren't spring-loaded to stick a float and flood the engine compartment with 101 octane fuel. At Ventura, nearly all the fifties rods sported them by the 3s, 4s, and even (left above) 6s. These are new ones that apparently are more rugged.

One of my best take-aways from the show is that hot-rodding is a multi-generational family affair with children and grandchildren of the pastime's golden age (the '50s) carrying on the tradition with pride and enthusiasm. Maybe it's the venue—the fact that the Ventura event may not be in the same league as the Oakland Roadster Show, SEMA in Las Vegas, or Hot August Nights in Reno—makes it so friendly, but after five hours of

walking around talking with car owners, I came to the conclusion that the hotrod culture is not only alive and well, but in great hands, carried forward by people from every walk of life. You want ecumenicism on steroids, go to a hotrod event in your neighborhood…or plan on coming to Ventura next summer.

*Ps. Just in…The custom car world received the earthquake level shock that the Barris Kustom Shop will move to Ventura next year. While the shop no longer makes the classics of yore, it exists as a tribute to its founder, George Barris, who died in 2015. It will be a welcome addition to the neighborhood.*

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**Root 66**

**Houston; Humility and the Rise of Humidity**

San Antonio might have been hot and dusty, but nothing to prepare us for Houston, which was hot, dusty, humid, and left everything smelling or tasting of petroleum…great if you're one of the area's Petro Barons, but progressively less so the farther down the economic ladder one sits. We of course couldn't even shinny our ways up to the first step, so our visit was a 'hello-and-goodbye affair without the need to stop for gas or a garfish sandwich. Instead, we kept the nose pointed eastward, past Beaumont into Louisiana, feeling no great relief from the heat and humidity until reaching Lake Charles, where 10 degrees cooler and the water content down to a pleasant 95%, we filled up with gas ($0.16[9]) and made a heavy investment in Tootsie Rolls, somebody's root beer, and something with the unappetizing name of gumbo, that was the winner of the trip so far…so good in fact that we dared not ask what was in it, fearing road kill or something from Morgan le Fe's kettle.

We spent that night under firefly filled skies just west of Baton Rouge, waking to the sounds of an idling Fordson tractor whose driver was sitting quietly trying to figure out who and what had invaded his fiefdom.

While we arose, dressed, packed away our dunnage, and prepared to depart, he watched impassively without so much as a twitch when I waved goodbye, and it was not until we had made it back up to the highway, he began his daily chores. The episode was odd enough to stick rather vividly in my memory, and I wonder if boggles his mind any more. I hope so.

Final thoughts on the day: We still hadn't got the handle on what we were up to, but about to.

My apologies to Houstonians, but perhaps that was *then* and *now* is different.

*Next time, Into the Florida Panhandle.*

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