



NMSR Reports

The Newsletter of the New Mexicans for Science and Reason

NMSR Reports, David E. Thomas, Editor, 1201 N. Avenida de Chamiso Pl., Socorro, NM 87801 © 2026

MAY MEETING:
**NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE AND
 REASON will host**
Skepticamp – NM 2026
**Featuring Nine Presentations,
 Demonstrations, More!**
=>SATURDAY, MAY 2nd, 2026
10:00AM – 6:00 PM<=
=>In-Person, at <=
UNM Continuing Education
1634 University Blvd NE,
Albuquerque, NM 87131
North Building, Room 123
See Page 3 for Maps

FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED!

**Skeptics, public to convene in
 Albuquerque for second SkeptiCamp**
*Educational weekend promises mysteries,
 critical thinking, science, community*

ALBUQUERQUE, N.M. – Following up on the success of the last *SkeptiCamp New Mexico* in June 2025, a second Skepticamp event will take place on Saturday, May 2, 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. at UNM's Continuing Education Conference Center, 1634 University Blvd., N.E., Albuquerque, New Mexico 87102, North Building, Room 123, with an optional outing on Sunday, May 3. The event is open to the public and will bring together professional and volunteer skeptics from all over the country. Snacks and lunch will be provided.

But what is a skeptic — volunteer, professional or otherwise?






Misinformation, scams and frauds have been around forever, though these dangers might seem ever-present today. While the modern skeptical movement has existed for well over 50 years, pushing against medical quackery, phony fortune tellers and pseudoscience, SkeptiCamps are relatively new, popping up in California, Colorado, Illinois, and elsewhere over the past few years. The idea is to show how skepticism can be fun and accessible, as applied to interesting topics such as aliens, ghosts, psychics, history, mysteries, Flat Earth, and more!

“The first SkeptiCamp New Mexico was fantastic,” said Gerbic, who has helped organize over a dozen such SkeptiCamps across the country. “Events like this help ignite people’s interest in defending facts and science. And we are always looking for more Wikipedia editors! You get to really make a difference fighting misinformation. Millions and millions of people have looked up pages we’ve written — that’s incredibly satisfying!”



The lineup for *SkeptiCamp New Mexico* includes a variety of speakers with unique expertise:

<p>Mark Boslough, physicist and space impact expert, on claims of an ancient asteroid impact.</p>	
	<p>Susan Gerbic, founder of the Guerilla Skeptics on Wikipedia, on how professional psychics employ a technique called cold reading.</p>
<p>Melanie Trecek-King, author of “A Field Guide to Spotting Misinformation,” on her popular “Thinking Is Power” program.</p>	
	<p>Kurly Tlapoyawa, local archaeologist, ethnohistorian and filmmaker, on “Debunking New Mexico’s ‘Hispanic’ Myth.”</p>
<p>David Weinberg, professor of ophthalmology, on the bizarre practice called “Eating the Sun.”</p>	
	<p>Benjamin Radford, investigator and author of 20 books including “Scientific Paranormal</p>

	<p>Investigation: How to Solve Unexplained Mysteries,” on the Pachacamac Mystery of Peru.</p>
<p>Matthew Lee Loftus, known as The Credible Hulk on social media, on public pushback against scientific consensus.</p>	
	<p>Ruth Frazier will discuss the legacy of her late husband, Ken Frazier, long-time editor of the <i>Skeptical Inquirer</i> science magazine.</p>
<p>Dave Thomas, adjunct professor at New Mexico Tech, on the Flat Earth movement and “The Final Experiment” in Antarctica.</p>	
	<p>A field trip is planned for Sunday, May 3, to visit the site of the “Los Lunas Decalogue,” claimed to be a pre-Colombian inscription chiseled out by Hebrew immigrants. Radford, Thomas, and Tlapoyawa will be on hand to offer commentary.</p>

7:00 PM May 2nd, 2026, 10:00AM-6:00 PM, UNM Continuing Education North Building, Room 123

New Mexicans for Science & Reason (NMSR)
 NMSR is a non-profit group with the goals of

promoting science, the scientific method, rational thinking, and critical examination of dubious or extraordinary claims. NMSR meets at 7 PM on a quarterly basis, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at a variable location. NMSR Reports is its official newsletter.

NMSR officers:

Dave Thomas, President

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Marilyn Savitt-Kring, Science Mom

Membership: **\$25/year** (hardcopy newsletter), or **\$15/year** (downloadable PDF), make your check **payable to NMSR**, send to treasurer (Debbie Thomas).

NMSR Advisors:

- *Mark Boslough,*
Adjunct Professor, University of New Mexico.
- *John Geissman*
Professor of Paleomagnetism
- *Alan Hale*
Southwest Institute for Space Research

Cyber-Cypher Clue: $V = Q$.

Bonus Puzzle Clue: Your Hint: Odd or Even?

WANTED: READER ARTICLES & COMMENTARY

Got something to share with NMSR members? **Send it in!** ATTN: Dave Thomas, Editor, NMSR Reports.

REMEMBER, our next NMSR meeting is **May 2nd 10am-6PM, UNM Cont. Educ. Bldg!**

PUZZLE TIME!

[Please send solutions to Dave Thomas at: nmsrdave@swcp.com, or at 1201 N Avenida de Chamiso Pl., Socorro NM 87801.]

May 2026 Bonus: "Pirate Gold"

Submitted by Dave Thomas

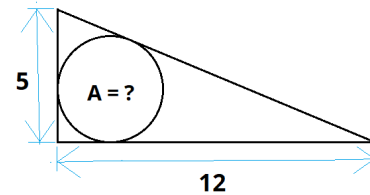


The Puzzle: There are 5 islands in a row. The Pirate known as the Mandarin Menace has a ton of gold hidden on one of them. During the day you have enough time to sail to just one island to find the gold. But, every night, the pirate moves all that gold exactly one island over. If it was on island 3, it gets moved to either island 2 or 4.

The May Bonus: What is the best strategy for finding the gold? Is it possible to be *sure* of finding the gold?

February 2026 Bonus Solution: "Area of Inscribed Circle"

Submitted by Dave Thomas



The February Bonus: What is the area of the inscribed circle in a right triangle with non-hypotenuse sides 5 and 12?

Answer: 4π .

Congrats to: Mike Arms, Rocky S. Stone, Harold Gaines, and Keith Gilbert.

Cyber-Cypher: APRIL 2026 PUZZLE

(Submitted by Dave Thomas)

The following letters are a simple substitution cypher. If R stands for L, R will stand for L everywhere. Your Cyber-Cypher Clue: Clue? Oh, well - if you must, see p. 2.

" P W J K B Q P Q P H H F U E G H Q U B F H B E
 Z K J L B I J H U U K G W Z O P L U F I J P A
 N B U O Q F - J V G P A C K P H Q O J L F E
 X F Y J K H W J H U O P Y B H X U O J
 P C B A B U S U F Q O J Q R O B L
 Z F N J K . " - Z K J L L L J Q K J U P K S
 R P K F A B H J A J P Y B U U

SUPER SECRET WORD!

However you prefer to do the cypher itself (above or below), simply duplicate those actions on the alphabetized row of cypher letters below. You'll build an answer key, and you'll also reveal - the Super Secret Word!

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

FEBRUARY 2026 CYPHER SOLUTION

SECRETARY ROBERT KENNEDY IS A DANGER TO THE PUBLIC'S HEALTH AND SHOULD RESIGN OR BE FIRED."
 - AMERICAN PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR GEORGES C. BENJAMIN, MD

Esteemed February Code Crackers: Mike Arms* and Austin Moede*!

*Secret Word: "UNFORGIVABLE MYTHS"

SOCORRO STUMPER

Need more Secret Word Cryptograms? New puzzles every week at www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm

NMSR February 6th Meeting: Human Rights Activist Leo Igwe, on “A Global Approach to Ending Witch Hunts in Modern Africa”



At our February 6th meeting, Leo Igwe of Nigeria gave a presentation on his work opposing witchcraft myths in his native country. He said “My organization, the Advocacy for Alleged Witches, has been intervening in similar cases in an effort to end witch hunts in Africa. In 2020, we launched a decade of activism against witch persecution and abuses linked to magical beliefs and ritual attacks. In the past few years AfAW has responded to over 300 hundred cases of witch hunts and ritual attacks.”

“Witch hunters are charlatans. They poison family relationships inciting members against themselves. Witch hunters exploit vulnerable members of the community, they get them to pay huge sums for religious theatrics, for carved items, pieces of red and white cloth, bones of dead animals, and sometimes smelly concoctions. They perform ritual dance, uncoordinatedly jump around pretending to be in a trance, but often under the influence of alcohol. The religious charade, Christian, Islamic, or traditional, that fuels and enables witch hunting must be called out and

criticized without fear or favour.”

Leo’s presentation is online at <http://nmsr.org/Leo-Igwe-Presentation.pdf>.

A vigorous Q&A session followed. NMSR thanks Leo Igwe for a stirring presentation.

Videos of past meetings are available at <http://www.nmsr.org/meetings.htm>.

Skepticamp 2024 Videos Online!

<https://www.skepticampnm.com/index.php/detailed-schedule/>

Skeptiverse Haiku for April! by Keith Thomas

Scientists who work With weights and measures at times Must measure and weight.	Sterile neutrinos Sound as though they’d have a low Reproduction Rate.
Soft speculation Can be cleverly molded Into hard dogma.	Quackery resides At the broad intersection Of hope, hype and fraud.
Vulcanology: Field researchers must know how To follow the flow.	There are numerous Examples of President Trump’s Innumeracy,

The NMSR e-mail list is fun! It’s an e-mail list with news announcements of interest to NMSR members, discussions about news of the times, and more. To join, send a request to nmsrdave@swcp.com.

DUES check the date on your mailing label. If it’s time for you to renew, or to make a contribution, please make your check **payable to NMSR**, and send it to Debbie Thomas, NMSR Treasurer, 3205 Alcazar NE, Albuquerque., NM 87110
Name _____
Address _____
Membership \$25 per annum (hard copy newsletter), or \$15 per annum (online newsletter).

Thanks to: John Covan, Debbie Thomas, Keith Thomas and all of our Puzzlers!

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SKEPTICAMP-NM

Saturday, May 2nd

10:00 AM-6:00 PM

UNM Continuing

Education Building