



NMSR Reports

The Newsletter of the
New Mexicans for Science and Reason

NMSR Reports, David E. Thomas, Editor, 801 Fitch Ave., Socorro, NM 87801 © 2018

JANUARY MEETING:

NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE
AND REASON WILL HEAR

Mark Fraser

on "The Cosmic Distance Ladder -
How do we really know the
distance?"

7:00 PM January 10th, 2018

==>**CNM MAIN CAMPUS,**
Student Resource Center<==

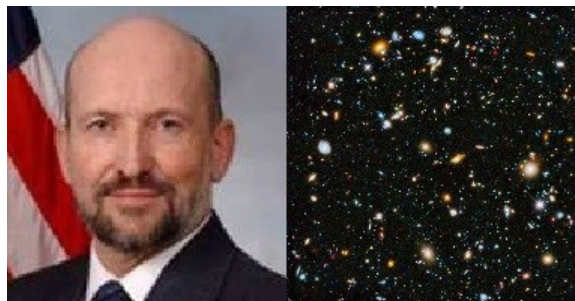
==>**Room 204**<==

Bring a friend!

FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

**January 10th, 2018 NMSR Meeting:
Mark Fraser, on "The Cosmic Distance
Ladder - How do we really know the
distance?"**

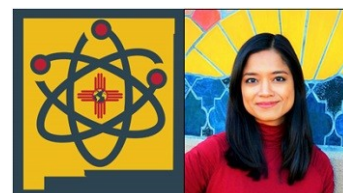
At our January 10th meeting, Mark Fraser will discuss how we know how big the Universe is... how far away are planets, stars, and galaxies? ... and how do we really know? Mark earned a Master's Degree in Physics from the University of Missouri-Rolla, and a Bachelor of Science Degree in Engineering Physics/Mathematics from Southeast Missouri State University. He has over 30 years of experience in ballistic missile defense research, specializing in infrared signatures and image



analysis, and currently teaches Astronomy at CNM.

Mark is a science advocate (he was recently awarded First Place in Public Policy by the American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics) and science activist, serving as co-editor of the March for Science Albuquerque FB page and giving public talks on science and global warming.

**Feb. 21st, 2018 (a week
Later than usual!):
Valorie Aquino on
"Organizing March
for Science: From
Moment to**



Movement". Valorie Aquino is a national board member of the March for Science movement, was a national co-chair organizing the March for Science on Earth Day 2017, founded MFS-ABQ, a TEDxABQ 2017 speaker, and recipient of the American Anthropological Society 2017 Executive Director's Award.. She is an anthropology Ph.D. candidate at UNM whose work reconstructs paleoclimate and cultural records in the ancient Maya world, and has contributed to publications in Science and Nature journals.

**Coming on March 14: "Life,
elevated" with hummingbird
biologist Chris Witt**



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 the second Wednesday of each month, in Albuquerque, New Mexico, at CNM's Student Resource Center, room 204 (@ Richard Barr Boardroom). NMSR Reports is its official newsletter.

NMSR officers:

Dave Thomas, President

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Marilyn Savitt-Kring, Science Mom

Harry Murphy, Physicist, Medical Quackery

Membership: \$20/year, includes newsletter, make your check payable to NMSR, send to treasurer (Thomas). Newsletter available in hard-copy and downloadable PDF.

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NMSR Advisors:

- **Mark Boslough**,
Physicist (Impacts, Climate Change,
Global Warming). Sandia National Labs.
- **Kendrick Frazier**
Editor, Skeptical Inquirer
- **John Geissman**
Professor of Paleomagnetism, UNM
- **Alan Hale**
Southwest Institute for Space Research
- **Randy Thornhill**
Professor of Biology, UNM

Cyber-Cypher Clue: Y = J, X = V.

Bonus Puzzle Clue: It's only two or three basic maths!

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 at 7 PM on **WEDS., JANUARY 10th, 2018**, at Student Resource Center, room 204 at CNM!

PUZZLE TIME!

[Please send solutions to Dave Thomas at: nmsrdave@swcp.com, or at 801 Fitch Ave., Socorro NM 87801.]

Cyber-Cypher: JANUARY 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.

```
" U F S           L P R O T O C U N L U O I T . . .
[ C L Z C ]       U F O C       O C       I T H Z
L M I D U   J F L U   Q I S C   O T U I   U F S
M D P Q S U .     M D U       . . .       U F S
C O Q T L H   U I   U F S   L Q S T E Z   O C
R D E F           C U N I T Q S N           U F L T
U F L U . "      -       P N .       L C F O C F
Y F L ,       I T       E P E ' C       " C S X S T
J I N P C "     M L T
```

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

DECEMBER CYPHER SOLUTION

"SCIENCE IS MORE THAN A BODY OF KNOWLEDGE. IT IS A WAY OF THINKING; A WAY OF SKEPTICALLY INTERROGATING THE UNIVERSE." - CARL SAGAN

Esteemed December Code Crackers: Mike Arms*, George Egert*, Terry Lauritsen* and Austin Moede*.

*Secret Word: "SINGULAR BY METHOD"

Need more Secret Word Cryptograms?

SOCORRO STUMPER

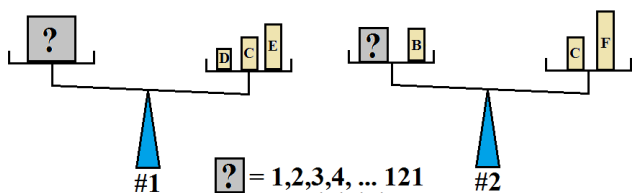
New puzzles every week at

www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm

January Bonus: “Inner Balance”

Inspired by David Morin, Harvard

You have a balance, and need to be able to verify any weight from 1 through 121 grams, to the nearest gram. You have a given number of unique fixed weights (called A, B, C, D, ... for convenience). You need to be able to weigh unknowns for two different modes of using your balance: Mode #1, in which only the unknown weight is on one scale, and Mode #2, in which some of the fixed weights can also be on the same scale as the unknown.



The January Bonus: What is the minimum number of weights, and what are their values, for Mode #1? For Mode #2?

The December Bonus: “Tug of War”

Two strong individuals are playing Tug-of-War with a very long, very strong, and very light-weight rope. The two players are strong enough to keep the rope taut, no matter how long it gets. They are playing the game on the Megaville Salt Flats, which are smooth and free of obstructions for hundreds of miles. The players are holding the rope four feet above the ground.



The December Bonus: Assuming that the Earth’s radius is 3960 miles, how far apart should the players be for the rope to just touch the ground?

ANSWER: 4.9 miles.

Congrats: Gene Aronson (NM), Earl Dombroski (NM), Rocky S. Stone (NM), Brian Pasko (NM), and Harold H. Gaines (KS)!

December 13th, 2017 Meeting: Ben Radford, on “New Mexico UFO Conspiracies”

At our December 13th meeting, Skeptical Inquirer managing editor Ben Radford discussed “New Mexico UFO Conspiracies.”



While New Mexico is “full of weirdness” (the Taos Hum, Miracles, Monsters, Ghosts, Crystal Skulls, and even

Chile-Induced Gastric Explosions (CIGE)), Radford said the weirdest of all might be our three famous UFO cases, Roswell, Aztec, and Dulce. (Apparently, Socorro’s incident is too “last week” to make the grade any more.)

Regarding Roswell, Ben said “There is no ‘The Roswell Story.’ It’s the Roswell *stories*, many of which are contradictory. Some authors give no credibility to certain claims and eyewitnesses that other authors believe are rock-solid and reliable. If you have enough dots or data points and you can pick and choose which ones to include, you can pretty much cherry pick evidence and build a case for whatever theory you want to.” Even though the original reports only described some flimsy scraps of metallic debris, the myth has grown to include tales of bodies and aliens.



While Roswell can be blamed on the government’s failed balloon-borne MOGUL program

(for trying to hear atomic blasts), the Aztec UFO legend was the result of a couple of con-men fooling a Hollywood reporter, Frank Scully. Scully's book based on the fanciful tales was popular, but a S.F. Chronicle reporter



turned the tables on the con men, exposing their use of "Old Betsy," a "doodlebug" made in America from Venusian parts, and which supposedly magnetically detected oil, water, and gas, and could diagnose any medical problems the user might have.



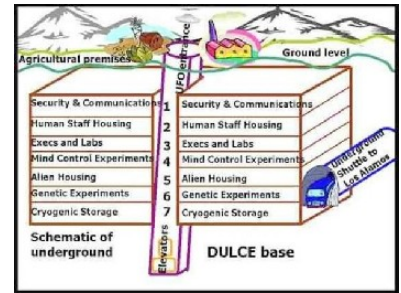
'Saucer Scientist' n \$50,000 Fraud



Swindle Alleged In Oil Tests
By CHARLES BOVIS
Denver Post Staff Writer
After 25 months, the "25, 30" project of finding water here and a possible oil field ends with a swindle. The project was started under the leadership of Dr. J. C. Pomeroy, a former company vice president, and the Denver Post and the Chronicle. Pomeroy's office is at 303 South Broadway. Pomeroy's office is at 303 South Broadway. Pomeroy's office is at 303 South Broadway.

program, nothing. "It's the UFO equivalent of the Bowling Green Massacre," Radford said.

NMSR thanks Ben Radford for an informative evening.



FLAT EARTH ARTICLES ON NMSR.ORG!

- Flat Earth Claim that Sun Acts Like a "Spotlight" -- DISPROVED!
- Simple, Inexpensive Experiment Proves Earth is Round!
- On the Flat Earth, The Sun Never Sets!
- **NEW!** On the Flat Earth, How High is the Sun?

www.nmsr.org/flatter.htm, also flatter2.htm, flatter3.htm, and flatter4.htm.

DUES - check the date on your mailing label. If it's time for you to renew, or to make a contribution, please send a check to **DEBBIE THOMAS, NMSR Treasurer**, 3205 Alcazar NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110

Name _____
Address _____
Membership \$20 per annum*
On the Net? Ask for the Paperless NMSR Reports! Send an email to nmsrdave@swcp.com "Dave Thomas" *For Renewals that are above the \$20 annual amount, the excess will be applied to the NMSR budget. Thanks!

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.

Thanks to: John Covan, Eddy Jacobs, Debbie Thomas, and all our Puzzlers!

As for Dulce, there's just one problem with all the fanciful tales of underground alien/human bases and even alien/human hybrids: there's nothing there. No activity, no frantic government secret

<p>NMSR Reports Vol. 24, No. 1 January 2018 David E. Thomas, Editor (505) 410-0753 801 Fitch Ave, Socorro NM 87801</p>	<p><i>IN THIS ISSUE:</i> Future Meetings Announced New Puzzles!</p>	<p> </p>
<p>Jan. 10th Meeting Mark Fraser on Astron. Distances 7:00 PM CNM SRC 204</p>	<p>December Meeting NM's UFOs</p>	<p> </p>