



NMSR Reports

The Newsletter of the
New Mexicans for Science and Reason

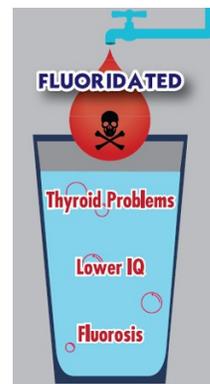
NMSR Reports, David E. Thomas, Editor, 801 Fitch Ave., Socorro, NM 87801 © 2019

AUGUST MEETING:
NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE AND REASON will hear
Dr. Stewart Thompson, on
“Fluoridation”
7:00 PM August 14th, 2019
==>CNM MAIN CAMPUS,
Student Resource Center<==
==>Room 204<==
Bring a friend!

August 14th, 2019 NMSR Meeting:
Dr. Stewart Thompson on Fluoridation



What are the downsides of too much fluoride? Why has fluoride been banned in many European



countries? With fluoride included in many dental products, what is a safe level for fluoride in public drinking water? Stewart Thompson, from the Psychology department at New Mexico Tech, will tackle this thorny topic at our August 14th meeting. Join us at 7:00 PM August 14th, 2019, CNM MAIN CAMPUS, Student Resource Center, Room 204.

FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

No NMSR Meeting in July!

NMSR is on vacation in July, and there won't be a meeting on the 2nd Wednesday.



This spirit level shows the plane is level with the clouds, and that the horizon lurks below. Because Globe.

Coming later this year:

Anay Hightower on Fire Science



“Clouds and Shadows” - from a recent trip to CA

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

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**,
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: $X = Z, Z = G$.

Bonus Puzzle Clue: $g = GM/R^2, T = 2\pi\sqrt{L/g}$.

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., AUGUST 14th, 2019**, 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: JULY 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.

" Q K A D J K D I J T R D K L J N E N Z U
H D Y N E S R A N J A X D N S H E A Y D Q ,
G S R B D B N H U , R H I T A R A N J I J T
B U R L O H I B D N S H H D Q C N J Q D . "
- L A Q R N H A I J I H R L S H B .
Q K L E D Q A J Z D H

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

JUNE CYPHER SOLUTION

"YOU JUST HAVE TO START EARLY AND GIVE KIDS A FOUNDATION. KIDS LIVE UP, OR DOWN, TO EXPECTATIONS." - ASTRONAUT/PHYSICIST MAE C. JEMISON, ON LEARNING SCIENCE.

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

*Secret Word: "TEACHING PROUDLY"

SOCORRO STUMPER

Need more Secret Word Cryptograms?

New puzzles every week at

www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm



July Bonus: “Takes a Licking, Keeps on Ticking...”

Submitted by Dave Thomas



	Radius R (m)	Mass M (kg)
Earth	6,371,000	5.97×10^{24}
Moon	1,737,000	7.34×10^{22}
Jupiter	69,911,000	1.90×10^{27}

Suppose you could take an Earthly pendulum clock, of pendulum length $L =$ one meter, to (A) the Moon’s surface, or to (B) Jupiter’s surface. Use the figures above to calculate gravitational acceleration on the surfaces of the Earth, the Moon, and Jupiter.

The July Bonus: How slow or fast would the clock run on the Moon and on Jupiter, compared to Earth?

June Bonus : “Date with Death”

Submitted by Dave Thomas

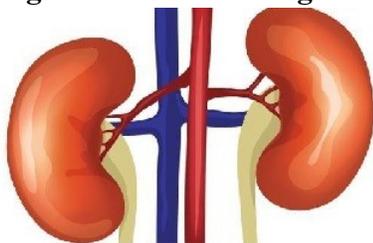
Our hero, Dr. Normal, must face seven deadly challenges in order to defeat the arch-villain Tweeter-Man. He only has one chance in seven of surviving each challenge.

The June Bonus: What is the probability that Dr. Normal will die during the ordeal?

Answer: $1 - [1/7]^7 \approx 0.9999988...$ or, very, *very* likely!

Congrats: Earl Dombroski (NM), Mike Arms (NM), Keith Gilbert (NM), Allen Robnett (NM), Harold H. Gaines (KS).

June 12th, 2019 NMSR Meeting: Ben Radford on “Organ Theft Urban Legends”



New Mexicans for Science and Reason heard Benjamin Radford, managing editor of the Skeptical Inquirer, speak on “Bitter Harvest: The Organ Theft Urban Legends.”

Ben said that stories of organ theft often proliferate in the mass media, and that there are two basic types of organ-snatching stories: “The Stolen Kidney,” and “The Baby Parts Story.” In the Stolen Kidney story, a businessman on vacation meets a beautiful young woman at a hotel bar, and they flirt and go back to his room for drinks. The next thing he remembers is waking up in a bathtub full of ice, with a note nearby saying that his kidney has been removed, and to call 911! There are many types of stories with identical themes and slightly different details (variants).

Coma (1978) was one of the first widely-seen books and films depicting organ theft.

There are two basic legends regarding kidney theft, one for adults, and another for children. In the Adult legend, the story is a morality tale about promiscuity, and usually takes place in the United States (often in Las Vegas or New Orleans). It is presented as a story or narrative legend, in which the Victim is alive, and is usually male.



In the Child (Baby Parts) legend, however, there is a Xenophobic Stranger Danger theme. These stories are usually placed in Latin America (Mexico, Guatemala, and Brazil), and are asserted as a known fact rather than a legend. The child victims are almost always dead, and the victim’s gender is irrelevant.

While newspapers and magazines profit from sensational headlines about vampiric organ thieves, the truth is that there is no evidence to suggest that organ theft rings exist, Radford said. For one, it is virtually impossible to remove a usable organ from an uncooperative donor and place it in a recipient. That would require sophisticated medical equipment, and donors and recipients must be carefully matched. All blood and tissue typing and histocompatibility tests must be done in advance, and thus with the "victim's" cooperation. Furthermore, the operation would take 4 to 6 hours, and involve 10 to 20 support staff, including three members of a surgical team, an anaesthesiologist, and two nurses. It would be a practical impossibility to assemble a large team of highly trained medical personnel willing to engage in such illegal and unethical behavior. Even highly paid medical staff are unlikely to risk performing such operations, jeopardizing both their careers and reputations.

How do these stories and urban legends get started? People interpret TV shows and movies as depicting real incidents (the “based on a true story” effect). There can be sensationalized, ill-informed news reports, and well-intentioned social justice activists can spread false rumors (e.g., World Organization Against Torture). Some of the stories are due to xenophobic rumors and gossip, e.g., Jewish blood libel myths. There can be political motives as well: during the Cold War, the Russian intelligence agency KGB actively encouraged and circulated rumors about Americans abducting and killing children for their organs.

Ben said that in recent years, it has become fashionable in Russia to sensationalize crime stories, especially ones with a

connection to organized crime. In fact, one of the tactics of organized crime is “Dissemination of frightening rumors as to their power, which brings criminal organizations more benefit than harm, since it demoralizes witnesses, victims, journalists, and law enforcement and supports the criminal spirit of rank and file members who execute functions.”

While actual abductions for harvesting organs are rare, Radford said, there are often misunderstandings of, and confusion with, genuine, verified topics, such as organ sales as opposed to organ theft. Creepy as it may seem, there are documented cases of people selling their own organs. In India, for example, many adults voluntarily sell one of their kidneys. Additionally, there are inter-country adoptions (sometimes shady, in which some children are “sold” by parents / others, especially from poor countries), but these arranged adoptions are *not* for organ transplants.

Organ selling made headlines in December 1989 when a Turkish man named Ahmet Koc claimed that three months earlier, he had been brought to London with the promise of a job. When he went in for a medical check, he was given an injection which he believed to be a blood test, but he claimed that he woke up the next day to find that a kidney had been removed. An investigation revealed that Koc had lied, however; he was in fact one of four Turks who voluntarily sold their kidneys in September of 1989. He was apparently unhappy with the amount paid him, and went to the press with his story.

There is a very serious downside to some reports of abductions and crimes. In 2013, Matthew and Grace Huang, an Asian couple from Los Angeles with adopted African children, went on trial in Qatar in November 2013, and were accused of starving their daughter Gloria to death in order to sell her organs. The defendants, according to an investigation, ‘participated with others in child trafficking, most likely to either sell their organs or to conduct medical experiments on them.’ The charges against the Huangs were absurd, Ben said. By starving their daughter to death, they would have severely damaged the very organs they were supposedly trying to sell. If some evil person truly wanted to take little Gloria’s organs, her death would have been quick, and done under medical supervision so that the organs could be retrieved immediately.

Rumors and urban legends about organ theft have very real and serious consequences—including death. Decreased organ donations, and avoidance of needed medical treatment (out of fear that their organs may be taken from them without consent) have been reported on several occasions. In May 2000, in rural Guatemala, a Japanese tourist and Guatemalan bus driver were stoned and beaten to death, and one body was set on fire, after false accusations that group members were looking for children to abduct for their organs.

NMSR thanks Ben Radford for a fascinating talk.

BBC NEWS
 You are in: World: Americas
 Monday, 1 May, 2000, 05:29 GMT 06:29 UK
Two stoned to death in Guatemala
 The excursion left two people dead
 A Japanese tourist and a Guatemalan bus driver have been beaten to death after villagers suspected a tour group of trying to kidnap children.

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).

The NMSR e-mail list is un! 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!

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NO MEETING IN JULY!
 NMSR is on Vacation!

IN THIS ISSUE:
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 New Puzzles!
 June Meeting - Organ Theft Urban Legends

