



NMSR Reports

The Newsletter of the
New Mexicans for Science and Reason

NMSR Reports, David E. Thomas, Editor, 801 Fitch Ave., Socorro, NM 87801 © 2015

MARCH MEETING:

NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE
AND REASON WILL HEAR

Victor Polyak, UNM

on “Paleoclimate from
Speleothems”

WEDS., MARCH 11th, 7 PM

==>MUSEUM OF NATURAL
HISTORY AND SCIENCE<==

==>1801 Mountain Road NW<==

In the Multi-Purpose Room

Bring a friend

FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED

March 11th, 2015 NMSR Meeting:

Victor Polyak, UNM will
speak on “Paleoclimate from
Speleothems” at our March 11th
meeting.



Speleothems are cave formations, and while many speleothem types are used in science, for paleoclimate research the highest resolution studies are using stalagmites. Stalagmites can grow 100s, 1000s, and tens of thousands of years continuously, providing records of past climate equal to those extracted from lake, marine, and ice cores. At the University of New Mexico Radiogenic Isotope Lab, we are funded by the National Science Foundation to build paleoclimate records from speleothems here in New Mexico, and from other parts of the world. The paleoclimate record from New Mexico’s Fort Stanton Cave is one of the best in the world.

7 PM Wednesday March 11th, New Mexico
Museum of Natural History and Science, Multi-Purpose

Room (to the left of the entry atrium), 1801 Mountain Road
NW

April 8th, 2015 NMSR Meeting:

Jason Wheeler of Sandia will speak on “A
Better Prosthesis” at our April meeting.



NMSR Newsletter Fee Change? Comments!

John Covan has suggested that NMSR consider charging recipients of the hardcopy newsletter an additional \$25 fee to cover the additional costs of the hard copy (printing, stamps and labor.) Here follows member comments received thus far-thanks!!

Keep those cards and letters coming! E-mail Dave Thomas at nmsrdave@swcp.com, or call at 505-410-0753, or mail to 801 Fitch Ave Socorro NM 87801.

Did the State of New Mexico cancel Darwin Days events after an Intelligent Design group asked to be included? NO! Details on Page 3.

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 the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science. NMSR Reports is its official newsletter.

NMSR officers:

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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 (Shelton). Newsletter available in hard-copy and downloadable PDF.

NMSR Advisors:

- *Mark Boslough*, Physicist (Impacts, Climate Change, Global Warming). Sandia National Labs.
- *Robert Cormack*, Professor of Psychology, NMIMT
- *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: F=P, T=Q

Bonus Puzzle Clue: Bernoulli trials!

WANTED: READER ARTICLES & COMMENTARY

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

REMEMBER, our next NMSR meeting is at 7 PM on **WEDNESDAY, March 11th, 2015**, at the **New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science!**

PUZZLE TIME!

[Please send solutions to Dave Thomas at: nmsrdave@swcp.com, or at P.O. Box 1017, Peralta NM 87042.]

Cyber-Cypher: MARCH 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.

" Y N ' G C S H B M
 A K D N B K S H B G Y C R Y G G I H ,
 N O H B H ' G C N B H L H D J K I G
 X K J M K V H S Y J H D A H
 C W C Y D G N J C B U Y D Y C D
 H S K R I N Y K D . . . " -
 Z C L H G A C L F X H R R ,
 B H N Y B H J H D W Y D H H B , K D
 E B T H D H U G 1 3 .

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 CYPHER SOLUTION

"A FLOWER DOES NOT THINK OF COMPETING WITH THE FLOWER NEXT TO IT. IT JUST BLOOMS." - UNKNOWN, FROM ZEN SHIN TALKS
 Esteemed February Code Crackers: Mike Arms*, Terry Lauritsen*, Alice Anderson*. *Secret Word: "GOAL ISN'T MUCH"

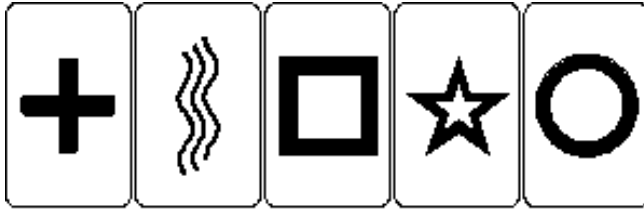
Need more Secret Word Cryptograms? New puzzles every week at www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm

March Bonus: "Calling Dr. Venkman"

Submitted by Dave Thomas

A psychology class is testing their ESP abilities with Zener cards (five cards: circle, square, bacon, star, and cross). **The March Bonus:** If each pair of students performs 25 trials,

what is the minimum number of matches for the probability of guessing the cards to be less than one in a million?



February Bonus: "Even Money Powerball Bet?"

Submitted by Gene Aronson

To win the Powerball jackpot one must choose five different numbers from 1 to 59, plus the Powerball number from one of 35 numbers. The bet is two dollars. One can win in nine ways: the largest prize is for matching all 5 numbers and the Powerball, and is a variable amount. The other 8 amounts are fixed payouts. Here are all nine ways to win, and their prize amounts:

- (1) 5 numbers + Powerball (PB): JACKPOT
- (2) 5 numbers:\$1,000,000;
- (3) 4 numbers +PB:\$10,000;
- (4) 4 numbers:\$100;
- (5) 3 numbers +PB:\$100;
- (6) 3 numbers:\$7;
- (7) 2 numbers +PB:\$7;
- (8) 1 number +PB:\$4;
- (9) PB only: 4\$

The February Bonus: What is the jackpot amount for an even bet (expected winnings = zero), for the situation in which (A) only the jackpot is considered, and the situation in which (B) all nine prizes are considered?

Solution: (A) Considering just the jackpot, the Jackpot needs to be \$350,447,018. (B) Considering all the prizes, the Jackpot needs to be \$276,276,620.

Congrats to our February Solvers: Eric Hanczyc (WA), Brian Pasko* (NM), Alice Anderson* (NM). * Part (A).

Letter To the Editor:

Science, 20 February 2015, Vol. 347, issue 6224 has a letter from John Pawlowski praising PETA. He says animal research is inapplicable to human illness. The "results generally fail to translate to people."

The same issue mentions human-applicable medical research on animals five times.

P. 824 and p. 842: Melanoma in red, black or white mice. (News item and report.)

P. 825: Oxytocin and social engagement in mice--possible treatment for autism in humans. (News item.)

P. 837: Mice and breast cancer. (News item.)

P. 838: Mouse T-cells and metabolism. (News item.)

P. 838: Galapagos finches and genetics of human face shape. (News item.)

Dr. Pawlowski allowed his love for animals to outweigh his respect for truth.

Sincerely,

Alice Anderson

News 13 and Albuquerque Journal Succumb to Creationist Whining...

By Dave Thomas

Perhaps you have seen the News 13 story "State cancels Darwin Days events after Intelligent Design group asks to be included" (<http://krqe.com/2015/02/27/state-cancels-darwin-days-events-after-other-groups-ask-to-be-included/>), or read the Albuquerque Journal story "Museum plunged into evolution debate" (<http://www.abqjournal.com/549593/news/alleged-cancellation-of-darwin-days-events-sparks-evolution-debate.html>). Did the State really cancel "Darwin Day" to spite the intelligent design movement?

No.

This whole thing was driven by News 13 being conned into running the "story" by the local Intelligent Design (ID) crowd. Briefly, the museum had a Darwin Day event in 2014 (OVER A YEAR AGO). There was a brief error of attribution of an NMSR event as co-sponsored by the museum in a flyer, but this was corrected LAST YEAR, BEFORE the event even took place. The museum tried to explain things to the ID folk (this is the Feb. 7, 2014 letter shown on News 13), but by that time the ID people were committed to pushing the false claim that "the museum is sponsoring anti-religion talks, so it should sponsor ID talks too." They made a huge stink about it last year, but then, the local news people knew better than to run a non story. Cut to this year, the museum has a new director, and there wasn't any effort to do another big Darwin Day like the one of 2014. NMSR didn't even do Darwin Day this year; we sponsored Michael Shermer.

Here's what the ID people really want: to have the museum sponsor their pseudoscience. That's why they are saying the museum

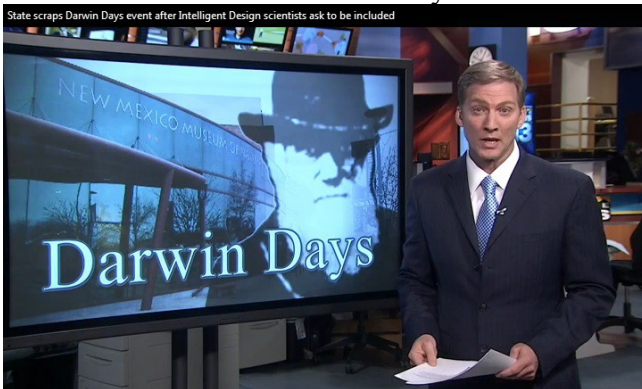
"cancelled" Darwin Day. But it's not an annual event. NMSR did have a few Darwin Days before, during, and after 2009 (sesquicentennial of Origin of Species and bicentennial of Darwin himself), but our Feb 2010 meeting was about patent law. Why didn't New 13 run a story on why we "cancelled" Darwin Day in 2010? Our Feb. 2011 meeting was on early American anthropology. Where was the outrage then? Our Feb. 2012 meeting was on science for the public (w/ Sandra Blakeslee of the NYT). Where were the protests that year? In 2013 we did Lake Monsters. Again, no ID protests, no News 13 "Story."

If you want to complain, please don't bother the museum. Tell that News 13 "reporter," Tina Jensen, and anchor Dean Staley, that they were CONNED into running a non-story that makes it look like the ID folks are being "discriminated against." Ditto for the Journal's Rick Nathanson. THAT is the story here.

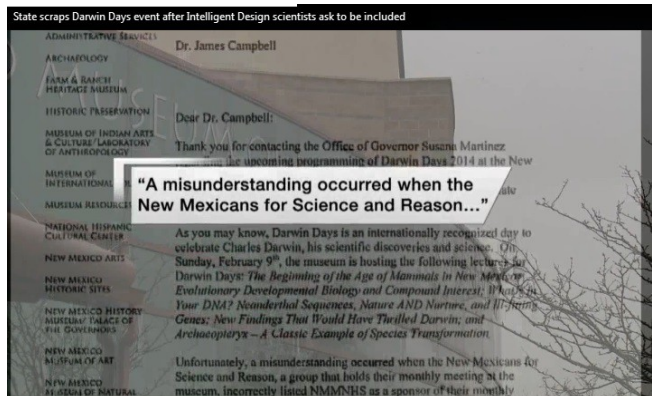
*think people should be aware of that."
Oh, really?*



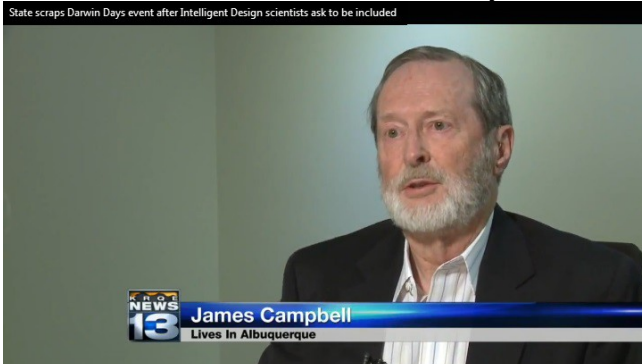
The letter. This was written to explain how a brief misattribution of sponsorship was corrected on February 7, 2014, two days before the museum-sponsored Darwin Day events, and five days before the supposedly "anti-religious" talks sponsored by NMSR took place on Feb. 12th.



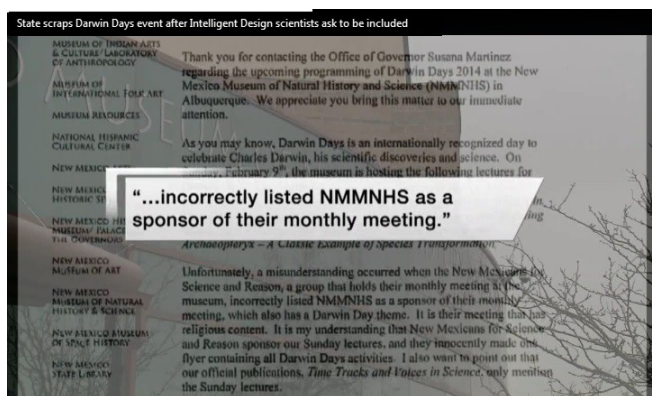
News 13 anchor Dean Staley



More of the Letter.



ID Advocate James Campbell, a retired engineer with a Ph.D. in physics, said "It's a very controversial issue, there's a tremendous body of evidence against Darwinian evolution and we



Yet more Letter.



Tina Jensen had no idea she was pandering to local creationists by airing their preposterous conspiracy theories as news.



More on Mike Edenburn at the "Know Your New Mexican Creationists" page, <http://www.nmsr.org/nmcists.htm>



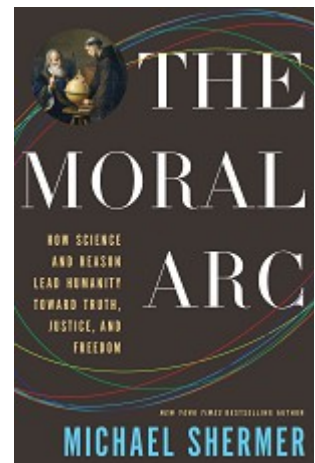
News 13 anchor Dean Staley said "None of the groups involved in planning the Darwin Day events would talk to News 13 on camera...". This comes across to many as saying NMSR didn't respond at all, which is quite incorrect.



NMSR's September 2013 speaker, Michael Roberts, wrote the Discovery Institute to say "You are totally incorrect to say NMSR is atheistic. It has a mixed membership, Christians included. As a priest in the Church of England I was invited to speak to them last September on Christianity and evolution. I also gave lectures at NMT. I was given a fine welcome, stayed with members. Of course some members are atheist but not all. Please don't force atheist- Christian war by your misrepresentation."

Feb. 21st Meeting– Michael Shermer!

NMSR and CESE teamed up to bring Michael Shermer, director of the Skeptics Society and prolific author, back to New Mexico. Shermer will speak at the Unitarian Church on Carlisle at Comanche, at 1:30 PM on Saturday, February 21st. Shermer gave an upbeat presentation on how well things are actually going for humanity. For example, in the middle ages, your probability of dying violently was 100 times what it is today. Freedom and liberty are on the rise in general. Shermer supports applying the scientific method to how we interact with society in general.





A large audience of over 160 attended the event. Shermer signed several copies of his latest book, "The Moral Arc of Science - How Science Has Bent the Arc of the Moral Universe Toward Truth, Justice, Freedom, & Prosperity." The theme of the book is that *"The arc of the moral universe bends toward truth, justice, freedom, and prosperity thanks to science-the type of thinking that involves reason, rationality, empiricism, and skepticism. The Scientific Revolution led by Copernicus, Galileo, and Newton was so world-changing that thinkers in other fields consciously aimed at revolutionizing the social, political, and economic worlds using the same methods of science. This led to the Age of Reason and the Enlightenment, which in turn created the modern secular world of democracies, rights, justice, and liberty."*

NMSR thanks Dr. Shermer for a fascinating presentation.

Top Right: Shermer Talk attendees at the post-game review. L-R Kim Johnson, Ben Radford, Dave Thomas,

and Ken Frazier.



More Skeptiverse Haiku! By Keith Thomas

When an old angler Is recasting his stories, The fish never shrink.	How many skeptics May soon suffer from anti- Vaccine overload?
What nonsense notions Hide inside perpetual Motion proposals?	Geoscientists Must investigate the odd Corners of the earth.
Never mind humans! How about spontaneous Bigfoot combustion?	The Irish may say The limerick should hold sway On St. Patrick's Day.

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 NANCY SHELTON, NMSR Treasurer, 11617 Snowheights NE, Albuquerque, NM 87112

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, Alice Anderson, Debbie Thomas, Keith Thomas, and all our Puzzlers!

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March Meeting
Caves and
Climate!
March 11th, 7pm
Museum of Natural
History & Science

IN THIS ISSUE:

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