



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 © 2021

OCTOBER MEETING:
NEW MEXICANS FOR SCIENCE AND REASON will hear
Larry Crumpler
on Mars Update!
=>October 20th, 2021 7:00PM<=
=>Attend online!<=

FUTURE MEETINGS ANNOUNCED!

October 20th, 2021 NMSR Meeting:
Larry Crumpler on “Update from Mars: Perseverance, Ingenuity and More”



You don't want to miss this one! Larry Crumpler is a volcanologist with the NM Museum of Natural History and Science. He has worked with NASA for years on rover missions to Mars, advising the team on geological considerations. He writes "I'm writing this Mars book now and summarizing 50 years of Mars exploration. I'm like the Forrest Gump of Mars information. I'm diving deep back to the 1970s. Back in those days, we didn't know anything about Mars. It's been quite a transition over the years."

Crumpler was picked as one of the 13 scientists selected by NASA to be on the science team of the Mars 2020 Perseverance Rover mission. During this mission, scientists will perform scientific investigations with the Perseverance rover, which landed on Feb. 18, 2021.



Because of the ongoing Corona virus crisis, this meeting will be held online, and members can attend from their homes or offices. It will be hosted on Zoom. A Zoom Link will be sent out to all members and potential attendees before the meeting. To get added to the attendee list, simply email nmsrdave@swcp.com.

Tune in to Zoom at 7:00 PM October 8th, 2021, On Line!

November 10th, 2021 NMSR Meeting:
“A Tunguska sized airburst destroyed Tall el-Hammam a Middle Bronze Age city in the Jordan Valley near the Dead Sea.”

That was the title of an article published in Scientific Reports on September 20th, 2021. The authors wrote "...we consider whether oral traditions about the destruction of this urban city by a cosmic object might be the source of the written version of Sodom in Genesis. We also consider whether the details recounted in Genesis are a reasonable match for the known details of a cosmic impact event."

NMSR will host a Zoom discussion on this article, and the storm of harsh criticism over the claims presented. Paul Braterman's [blog](#) mentions several: Problems listed by acknowledged experts in PubPeer include misuse of Mark Boslough's account of airbursts (Boslough is a long-standing critic of the claims of the Trinity Southwestern University(TSU group). **CONTINUED 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 a secure, undisclosed location. NMSR Reports is its official newsletter.

NMSR officers:

Dave Thomas, President

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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
- **Alan Hale**
 Southwest Institute for Space Research
- **Randy Thornhill**
 Professor of Biology, UNM

Cyber-Cypher Clue: Y = X, V = W

Bonus Puzzle Clue: Stick to the facts and you can succeed.

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 **ONLINE, October 20th at 7PM, on Zoom!**



PUZZLE TIME!

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

Cyber-Cypher: OCTOBER 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.

" A I L K M K G R M A P Q K R X D T I I B Q H U
 V I I Z M G C D T I F B R A I J K L Q B R Z
 B M G R I G C D T I J G M D
 K J F G Q D B R D F P O H K L T I B H D T
 C B K H P Q I M D T I P R K D I A Z K R X A G J
 T B M I W I Q I Y F I Q K I R L I A . " -
 J I J O I Q M G C F B Q H K B J I R D

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

SEPTEMBER CYPHER SOLUTION

"THERE ARE NO RULES, ONLY THE PRINCIPLES OF INTEGRITY AND OBJECTIVITY, WITH A COMPLETE REJECTION OF ALL AUTHORITY EXCEPT THAT OF FACT." - JOEL H. HILDEBRAND, ON SCIENCE.

Esteemed September Code Crackers: Mike Arms*, and Austin Moede*!

*Secret Word: "GENIUS FLOWCHART"

SOCORRO STUMPER

Need more Secret Word Cryptograms?

New puzzles every week at
www.nmsr.org/SocorroStumper.htm

October Bonus: "Office Football Pool"

Submitted by Dave Thomas

Eight staffers at an office participate in a weekly football pool. The pool goes for 16 weeks of the NFL season. The participants are evenly matched as regards predicting game winners. Each week has a definite winner, predictions of the total score for Monday night football are used to break ties.

The October Bonus: What is the most likely number of wins for any given participant over the course of the 16-week season?

September Bonus Solution: “Multiple Choice”*Submitted by Dave Thomas*

(1) If you choose an answer to this question at random, what is the chance you will be correct?

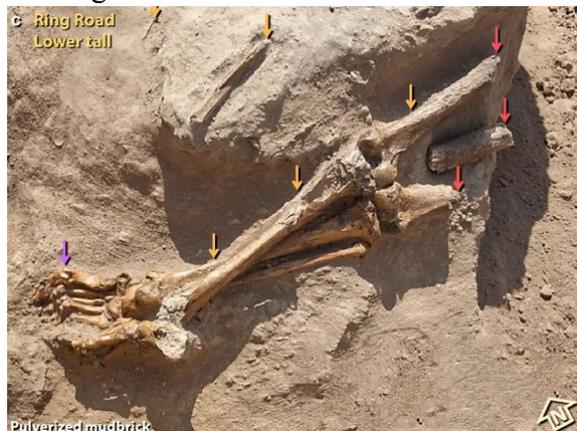
A	B	C	D	E
0%	20%	25%	50%	75%.

(2) If you choose an answer to this question at random, what is the chance you will be correct?

A	B	C	D
0%	20%	50%	75%.

Answer: (1) B, (2) None of the above**Congrats:** Rocky Stone, Earl Dombroski, and Mike Arms!**Tall el-Hammam/Nov. 10th Mtg., continued**

Other problems mentioned by Braterman include: “no clear evidence that the destruction of the palace walls was catastrophic, absence of qualified examination of skeletons, anatomically misdescribed bones, claims without evidence that bone damage was associated with traumatic death, rather than later damage, the mixing of kinds of debris is commonplace and not evidence of catastrophe, the connection of the carbon-14 dates to the alleged destruction is not established, and claims of burning of bone lack evidence and consistency.” Additionally, there was substantial undeclared image manipulation (eventually admitted) described as “without significance”.



Paul also notes that “In the paper’s Figure 44c, shadows are cast by a sun shining from the direction labelled North. This obviously cannot happen at Tall el-Hammam, giving rise to further concerns about the quality of the work.”

This will be an interesting meeting, don’t miss it!

September 8th, 2021 NMSR Meeting: Ivermectin and Covid: Miracle Cure or Dangerous Distraction?

Dave Thomas showed this tweet by NM District 2 congressional representative Yvette Herrell, which linked to a paper from the National Institute of Health on using ivermectin to treat COVID-19.



The NIH paper concluded “*Meta-analyses based on 18 randomized controlled treatment trials of ivermectin in COVID-19 have found large, statistically significant reductions in mortality, time to clinical recovery, and time to viral clearance. Furthermore, results from numerous controlled prophylaxis trials report significantly reduced risks of contracting COVID-19 with the regular use of ivermectin.*” However, a review of this paper showed it included a flawed study by Elgazzar and colleagues at Benha University in Egypt which was subsequently retracted. The lead author, Pierre Kory, is part of an advocacy group called Front-Line Covid-19 Critical Care Alliance (FLCCC). Coffee Brown made the point that a member of any advocacy group has, by definition, a vested interest in the group’s mission, and that this should be mentioned in supposedly neutral articles. Looking at papers mentioning this one brought up a critical review that found COVID cases actually *increased* after ivermectin usage increased.

Dave discussed a different group which promoted hydroxychloroquine for COVID last year, America’s Front Line Doctors (AFLDs). This group, tweeted approvingly by then-president Trump, includes Dr. Stella Immanuel, who also claims that aliens are messing with our DNA, and demons are impregnating people.

Random Controlled Trials were discussed; Dave mentioned these could also be called “trick or

treatments”. Coffee showed us a review of ivermectin/COVID research by the Cochrane Library (www.cochranelibrary.com), which he described as a very thorough review group, akin to “the Supreme Court” of medical controversies, with the tightest, most rigorous reviews in the business. The Cochrane review started by giving the idea some credit: *“Ivermectin, an antiparasitic agent used to treat parasitic infestations, inhibits the replication of viruses in vitro. The molecular hypothesis of ivermectin's antiviral mode of action suggests an inhibitory effect on severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) replication in the early stages of infection.”* Coffee pointed out that the separate studies in a meta-analysis must be similar (size.scope) to be compared, and that bad results can be obtained by pooling all studies as “equal”. A review, on the other hand, weights the various studies, and would not give flawed studies as much consideration.

The Cochrane review concluded that *“Ivermectin showed no evidence of an effect on increasing or decreasing mortality at 28 days, the most important outcome during this pandemic, neither in inpatients (two studies), outpatients (two studies), or the preventive setting (one study). The certainty for this finding was very low.”* The data certainly didn’t support ivermectin helping combat COVID, but wasn’t thorough enough to rule it out completely.

A free-wheeling discussion ensued. The Journal published an article saying greenhouse-grown plants are inferior to outdoors plants.

Principal Component Analysis came up, and the effect of too many variables was discussed. Immune system status and several other topics were brought up.

NMSR thanks Coffee Brown, Austin Moede, Gerry Alldredge and our other participants for a fascinating presentation. **Videos of this and other meetings are available at <http://www.nmsr.org/meetings.htm>.**

October Skeptiverse Haiku!
by Keith Thomas

History’s timeline Shows, of course,/Descartes didn’t Come before ‘de horse.	Perhaps our nation Needs a National Dump for Irrational bunk!
Pseudoscientists Have expertly exploited Scientific terms.	Products clinic’ly Tested, in tests perhaps got Clinic’ly bested.
Though Maine waters drain, With Maine rains, Maine’s main waters Mainly rise again.	Who has got the guts To handle a horse’s dose Of ivermectin?

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 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, Keith Thomas and all of our Puzzlers!

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October Meeting:
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