

by Scott_LaFee

THIS BEETLE CAN'T SING

VERBATIM - The guy who invented the first wheel was an idiot, but the guy who invented the other three, now he was a genius -- comedian Sid Caesar. CNS Photo. THIS BEETLE CAN'T SING - Entomologists have named and described a new kind of Indian whirligig beetle as *Orectochilus orbisonorum*, in honor of the late rock 'n' roll legend Roy Orbison. CNS Photo. WHAT IS IT? - The long, streaky clouds on the left side of the image resemble airplane contrails, but in fact they are exhaust trails left in the wake of ships passing along the northwest coast of North America. CNS Photo. POETRY FOR SCIENTISTS - From way down in my cranium, this prediction I will make: That if you eat uranium, you'll get atomic ache. -- Ted Shoemaker. CNS Photo. Entomologists have named and described a new kind of Indian whirligig beetle, part of a wide-ranging family of aquatic insects. It's called *Orectochilus orbisonorum*, in honor of the late rock 'n' roll legend Roy Orbison.

Creative naming isn't new to entomologists Quentin Wheeler of Arizona State University and Kelly Miller of the University of New Mexico, who discovered the new beetle with Paolo Mazzoldi of Brescia, Italy.

In 2005 Wheeler and Miller made news with the discovery of 65 new species of slime-mold beetles. The entomologists named three of the species in honor of President George W. Bush, Vice President Dick Cheney and then-Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld. One other was named after Darth Vader.

VERBATIM

The guy who invented the first wheel was an idiot, but the guy who invented the other three, now he was a genius.

- Comedian Sid Caesar

BRAIN SWEAT

A schoolgirl can win a bonus if she sells 100 magazine subscriptions. Each day she sells three more subscriptions than the previous day, reaching her goal of 100 on the eighth day. How many subscriptions did she sell each day?

BRAIN SWEAT ANSWER

On the first day, she sold 2 subscriptions, then 5, 8, 11, 14, 17, 20 and 23, totaling 100.

'TRUE FACTS'

The Egyptian hieroglyph for 100,000 is a tadpole.

ANECDOTAL EVIDENCE

William Shockley, the late American physicist who shared a Nobel Prize for co-inventing the transistor, had some strong and controversial notions about genetics. He was a big supporter of eugenics, believing his work was crucial to improving the human race.

When he looked at his own children, however, he sighed, once noting that his two sons and daughter represented "a significant regression" in evolutionary intelligence - at least compared with their father.

But it wasn't his fault, he said. Rather, it was his wife's lack of high academic achievement.

ELECTRON INK

Improbable Research

improbable.com/magazine

The storied journal that brings you the latest in unlikely science (Kansas really is flatter than a pancake) and hands out the annual Ig Nobel awards has apparently conceded that the whole Internet thing isn't going to go away. As a result, the magazine has gone online for free. This is a good thing. Probably.

JUST ASKING

What specifically do they sell in general stores?

CARTOON LAWS OF PHYSICS

Any sentient being suspended in space will remain in space until made aware of its situation. Example: Wile E. Coyote unknowingly steps off a cliff, where he loiters in midair until, by chance, he looks down. At this point, the familiar principle of 32 feet per second per second takes over.

WHAT IS IT ANSWER

The long, streaky clouds on the left side of the image resemble airplane contrails, but in fact they are exhaust trails left in the wake of ships passing along the northwest coast of North America.

All clouds form when water molecules coalesce onto tiny particles in the atmosphere. The particles can be natural in origin, such as dust and sea salt, or aerosols emitted by human activity. With only the water's surface to influence it, air over the ocean tends to be uniform, frequently resulting in flat, wide sheets of clouds. When ships introduce new particles into the air through their exhaust, water molecules readily cling to the particles, creating ship tracks.

Scientists study ship tracks to see how human emissions influence clouds and, ultimately, the Earth's climate.

POETRY FOR SCIENTISTS

From way down in my cranium

This prediction I will make:

That if you eat uranium, You'll get atomic ache.

- Ted Shoemaker

ANTHROPOLOGY 101

The ancient Maori of New Zealand believed that God sneezed life into humans. Conversely, ancient Egyptians thought people could sneeze themselves to death by inadvertently blowing their souls out their noses.

Eureka! Daily discoveries for the scientifically bent by Scott_LaFee