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Nobel Laureate

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Nobel Laureate
How a dead duck changed my life

Kees Moeliker,
Ig Nobel Prize for Biology 1995
The first case of homosexual necrophilia in the mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (Aves: Anatidae)

Moeliker, C.W., 2001 - The first case of homosexual necrophilia in the mallard *Anas platyrhynchos* (Aves: Anatidae) - DEINSEA 8: 243-247 [ISSN 0932-9308]. Published 9 November 2001

On 5 June 1995 an adult male mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) collided with the glass facade of the Natuurmuseum Rotterdam and died. An other drake mallard raped the corpse almost continuously for 75 minutes. Then the author disturbed the scene and secured the dead duck. Dissection showed that the rape-victim indeed was of the male sex. It is concluded that the mallards were engaged in an ‘Attempted Rape Flight’ that resulted in the first described case of homosexual necrophilia in the mallard.

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Keywords: homosexuality, necrophilia, non-consensual copulation, mallard, *Anas platyrhynchos*

The all glass façade of the extension of the Natuurmuseum Rotterdam, situated in an urban park, acts - under certain light condi-

(Fig. 1). Next to the obviously dead duck, another male mallard (in full adult plumage without any visible traces of moult) was pres-
Using magnets to levitate frogs

Andre Geim,
Ig Nobel Prize for Physics 2000
Of flying frogs and levitrons

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Received 4 June 1997

Abstract. Diamagnetic objects are repelled by magnetic fields. If the fields are strong enough, this repulsion can balance gravity, and objects levitated in this way can be held in stable equilibrium, apparently violating Earnshaw’s theorem. In fact Earnshaw’s theorem does not apply to induced magnetism, and it is possible for the total energy (gravitational + magnetic) to possess a minimum. General stability conditions are derived, and it is shown that stable zones always exist on the axis of a field with rotational symmetry, and include the inflection point of the magnitude of the field. For the field inside a solenoid, the zone is calculated in detail; if the solenoid is long, the zone is centred on the top end, and its vertical extent is about half the radius of the solenoid. The theory explains recent experiments by Geim et al, in which a variety of objects (one of which was a living frog) was levitated in a field of about
Courtship behaviour of ostriches (*Struthio camelus*) towards humans under farming conditions in Britain

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Abstract  1. The courtship behaviour of adult male and female ostriches was observed in the presence and absence of human beings.
  2. Courtship behaviours in both males and females were more prevalent in the presence of humans.
  3. Exposure to a human for a short period did not stimulate courtship behaviour in the period immediately after the human had withdrawn.
  4. Courtship behaviour towards humans may be important in the reproductive success of ostriches in a farming environment.

INTRODUCTION

Ostrich (*Struthio camelus*) farming is increasing in Britain, Europe and many countries around the world (Deeming and Angel, 1996). As a consequence there has been a need for rapid development of husbandry systems for these birds. Whilst the behaviour of breeding ostriches under natural conditions has been documented (Sauer and Sauer, 1966a,b; Hurxthal, 1979; Bertram, 1992) our knowledge of ostrich behaviour in a farming environment is limited. Mating behaviour in captivity has been described by Bolwig (1973) but comprehensive data are not available despite the importance of normal breeding activity in the production of birds for breeding or slaughter. An understanding of mating behaviour in captivity is an essential part of developing appropriate management techniques for these birds.

behaviours but there is no report about such a phenomenon in the literature.

The 2 experiments reported here were designed to answer the following questions. Does the presence of humans trigger courtship behaviour in adult ostriches? Does daily exposure to human beings affect mating behaviour and fertility? Does the presence of a human trigger mating behaviour toward other ostriches in the period immediately following exposure to the human? Findings are discussed in terms of mating behaviours observed in the wild together with factors which might be influencing the observed courtship and mating behaviours. Additional observations were made at a 2nd commercial farm (in Oxfordshire) to check that the observed courtship displays to humans were not particular to the ostriches at Hangland Farm.
The 2012 Ig Nobel Prize Winners
The Ig Nobel Prize for Psychology
Anita Eerland and Rolf Zwaan [The Netherlands] and Tulio Guadalupe [Peru, Russia, and the Netherlands] for their study “Leaning to the Left Makes the Eiffel Tower Seem Smaller”
Leaning to the Left Makes the Eiffel Tower Seem Smaller: Posture-Modulated Estimation

Anita Eenland, Tulio M. Guadalupe, and Rolf A. Zwaan
Erasmus University Rotterdam

Abstract
In two experiments, we investigated whether body posture influences people’s estimation of quantities. According to the mental-number-line theory, people mentally represent numbers along a line with smaller numbers on the left and larger numbers on the right. We hypothesized that surreptitiously making people lean to the right or to the left would affect their quantitative estimates. Participants answered estimation questions while standing on a Wii Balance Board. Posture was manipulated within subjects so that participants answered some questions while they leaned slightly to the left, some questions while they leaned slightly to the right, and some questions while they stood upright. Crucially, participants were not aware of this manipulation. Estimates were significantly smaller when participants leaned to the left than when they leaned to the right.
The Ig Nobel Prize for Peace
The SKN Company [Russia]

for converting old Russian ammunition into new diamonds.
The Ig Nobel Prize for Acoustics
Kazutaka Kurihara and Koji Tsukada [Japan]

for creating the SpeechJammer

a machine that disrupts a person’s speech by making them hear their own spoken words at a very slight delay.
SpeechJammer: A System Utilizing Artificial Speech Disturbance with Delayed Auditory Feedback

Kazutaka Kurihara, Koji Tsukada

(Submitted on 28 Feb 2012 (v1), last revised 13 Apr 2012 (this version, v3))

In this paper we report on a system, "SpeechJammer", which can be used to disturb people's speech. In general, human speech is jammed by giving back to the speakers their own utterances at a delay of a few hundred milliseconds. This effect can disturb people without any physical discomfort, and disappears immediately by stop speaking. Furthermore, this effect does not involve anyone but the speaker. We utilize this phenomenon and implemented two prototype versions by combining a direction-sensitive microphone and a direction-sensitive speaker, enabling the speech of a specific person to be disturbed. We discuss practical application scenarios of the system, such as facilitating and controlling discussions. Finally, we argue what system parameters should be examined in detail in future formal studies based on the lessons learned from our preliminary study.
The Ig Nobel Prize for Neuroscience
Craig Bennett, Abigail Baird, Michael Miller, and George Wolford [USA]

for demonstrating that brain researchers, by using complicated instruments and simple statistics, can see meaningful brain activity anywhere —

even in a dead salmon.
Neural Correlates of Interspecies Perspective Taking in the Post-Mortem Atlantic Salmon: An Argument For Proper Multiple Comparisons Correction

Craig M. Bennett\textsuperscript{1*}, Abigail A. Baird\textsuperscript{2}, Michael B. Miller\textsuperscript{1} and George L. Wolford\textsuperscript{3}
The Ig Nobel Prize for Chemistry
Johan Pettersson [Sweden and Rwanda]

for solving the puzzle of why, in certain houses in the town of Anderslöv, Sweden, people’s hair turned green.
The Ig Nobel Prize for Literature
The US Government General Accountability Office

for issuing a report about reports about reports…
...that recommended the preparation of a report
May 10, 2012

Subject: Defense Management: Actions Needed to Evaluate the Impact of Efforts to Estimate Costs of Reports and Studies

Citing long-term fiscal challenges affecting the federal government, in May 2010, the Secretary of Defense directed the Department of Defense (DOD) to undertake a departmentwide initiative to assess how the department is staffed, organized, and operated with the goal of reducing excess overhead costs and reinvesting these savings in sustaining DOD’s current force structure and modernizing its weapons portfolio. The Secretary’s initiative targeted both shorter- and longer-term improvements and set specific goals and targets for achieving cost savings and efficiencies. The initiative was organized along four tracks, each of which had a different focus (see enc. I). The fourth track focused on specific areas where DOD could take immediate action to reduce inefficiencies and overhead, in particular, to reduce headquarters and support bureaucracies and to instill a culture of cost consciousness and restraint in the department. As part of the fourth track, the Secretary of Defense announced a number of specific initiatives, including actions intended to address the need to reduce or eliminate reporting requirements for DOD
The Ig Nobel Prize for Physics
Joseph Keller [USA], Raymond Goldstein [USA and UK], Patrick Warren, and Robin Ball [UK]

for calculating the balance of forces that shape and move the hair in a human ponytail.
PONYTAIL MOTION*

JOSEPH B. KELLER†

Abstract. A jogger’s ponytail sways from side to side as the jogger runs, although her head does not move from side to side. The jogger’s head just moves up and down, forcing the ponytail to do so also. We show in two ways that this vertical motion is unstable to lateral perturbations. First

Shape of a Ponytail and the Statistical Physics of Hair Fiber Bundles

Raymond E. Goldstein, 1 Patrick B. Warren, 2 and Robin C. Ball 3

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(Received 17 November 2011; published 13 February 2012)

A general continuum theory for the distribution of hairs in a bundle is developed, treating individual fibers as elastic filaments with random intrinsic curvatures. Applying this formalism to the iconic problem of the ponytail, the combined effects of bending elasticity, gravity, and orientational disorder are recast as a differential equation for the envelope of the bundle, in which the compressibility enters through an
The Ig Nobel Prize for Fluid Dynamics
Rouslan Krechetnikov [USA, Russia, Canada] and Hans Mayer [USA]

for studying
the dynamics of liquid-sloshing,
to learn what happens
when a person walks
while carrying
a cup of coffee.
Walking with coffee: Why does it spill?

H. C. Mayer and R. Krechtnikov

Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of California, Santa Barbara, California 93106, USA
(Received 23 December 2011; published 26 April 2012)

In our busy lives, almost all of us have to walk with a cup of coffee. While often we spill the drink, this familiar phenomenon has never been explored systematically. Here we report on the results of an experimental study of the conditions under which coffee spills for various walking speeds and initial liquid levels in the
The Ig Nobel Prize for Anatomy
Frans de Waal [The Netherlands and USA] and Jennifer Pokorný [USA]

for discovering that chimpanzees can identify other chimpanzees individually from seeing photographs of their rear ends.
Six adult chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*) trained on computerized matching-to-sample were shown a sample behind (anogenital region) of a chimpanzee and rewarded for selecting a corresponding facial image. If the two faces were of the same sex, and one belonged to the same individual as the behind, subjects made the correct association for familiar individuals but not unfamiliar ones, suggesting whole-body knowledge of group mates. If the two faces were of opposite sex, subjects selected the same-sex face as the behind at first only for familiar individuals when face and behind belonged to the same individual. During subsequent exposures, however, they learned to associate the same-sex face with the behind even if the behind was “generic” male or female (i.e., unmatched to any known individual) provided the depicted individuals were familiar. This suggests the chimpanzees were able to “construct” details of the faces of familiar individuals.
The Ig Nobel Prize for Medicine
Emmanuel Ben-Soussan and Michel Antonietti [France]

for advising doctors who perform colonoscopies how to minimize the chance that their patients will explode.
Colonic gas explosion during therapeutic colonoscopy with electrocautery

Spiros D Ladas, George Karamanolis, Emmanuel Ben-Soussan

Abstract

Therapeutic colonoscopy with electrocautery is widely used around the world. Adequate colonic cleansing is considered a crucial factor for the safety of this procedure. Colonic gas explosion, although rare, is one of the most frightening iatrogenic complications during
12 September, 2013

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