



Dummy Source

Holiday Edition!

The Best and Only Medical Physics Newsletter



Issue #2

Medical Physicists celebrate International Day by trying to explain what is medical physics

The Nov 7th holiday traditionally involves PowerPoint presentations, awkward analogies, and confused friends and family. "So, you're like a radiation pharmacist?" asked one perplexed relative. (P.Watson)

Post-Thanksgiving Bulging: Local electron profiles struggle with lateral spread after too much turkey
(K.O'Sullivan-Steben)

New Schrödinger diaries discovered!

Physicist recounts his love of *A Christmas Carol*, attributes famous Schrödinger equation to "Tiny Tim, who may or may not have died". (T.Chernoff)

New Care Program Launched for Retired Dosimetrists

(Charleston, South Carolina) At the Green Meadows Assisted Living Facility, Director John Mulaire is proud to speak about an initiative that began this November. "We have so many former dosimetrists here due to the proximity of one of the largest dosimetry training programs in the country" said Mulaire. Starting November 7th, former dosimetrists living at Green Meadows were issued an Eclipse workstation and receive daily printouts with a treatment planning directive for a single patient. Synthetic CT images and contours are created with generative AI, so every plan is unique. When asked about how the program was being received, Mulaire said, "They just love it. And an unexpected benefit is that we're saving a great deal on electricity, since they like to work in the dark".

To increase the realism of the initiative, Green Meadows has recently started withholding contours and making program participants badger the attending physician (role-played by a member of the facility staff) to have contours released before treatment time.

Planning Continued on page A13. (J.DeCunha)

Dummy Source is now on the web!

thedummysource.github.io

Download past issues, subscribe to the mailing list, marvel at my html skills.

In Memoriam: Terence Burlin

We regret to inform the passing of Dr. Terence Burlin, inventor of Burlin cavity theory. Appropriately, his funeral service was said to be of intermediate size. (P.Watson)

Holiday Gift Guide (for Medical Physicists)

Physicists can be a tricky bunch to go shopping for. To help you or your loved ones out, here's a list of the hottest med phys gifts this season:

- Water phantom levelling gloves & can of stepper motor lubricant (I lubricon't believe you got me this!)
- InvisiBolus™: 100% thinner than the leading brand! Same dose effect as forgetting to put bolus on.
- Gift card to the hospital cafeteria.
- Swag Hutch: for all that conference swag! (holds up to 4 swags).
- A copy of Dummy Source: Holiday Edition. Printed out and crumpled up, it literally makes a perfect stocking stuffer. (P.Watson & A.Berry)

WELCOME TO PureRay ONCOLOGY
Where Healing Meets Nature... and Physics

100% ORGANIC PHOTONS
Harvested at dawn from ethically-sourced quantum fields, our photons are free-range, cruelty-free, and never genetically modified. No synthetic wavelengths, No artificial frequencies. Just pure, radiant goodness.

WAVEGUIDE-TO-TABLE DELIVERY
Our proprietary PhotonFarm Waveguide System ensures that every beam travels directly from our eco-certified waveguides to your treatment table—no middlemen, no scattering, no nonsense.

ECO-LUMINESCENT THERAPY
We care about your cells and the planet. Our clinic runs on solar-powered cyclotrons and recycles every unused photon back into the quantum compost.

SIDE EFFECTS MAY INCLUDE:

- Enlightenment
- A sudden appreciation for particle physics
- Mild smugness from choosing the most sustainable radiation option available.

VISIT PURERAY TODAY
Because your body deserves the cleanest radiation money can buy.

(P.Watson)

Event Review: "Spooky Action" Ran Oct 25-Nov 2, 2025

This Halloween themed popup physics exhibit was held in the shuttered City Science Centre. The presentation included pre-recorded narration by science communication darling Dr. Brian Cox and an original soundtrack by Stepin Merritt. Some critics weren't impressed with the production: "Cox' trademark subdued delivery continues to bring nothing of his high energy physics background."

Corporate sponsorship was on prominent display as the General Motors Company eagerly promotes the 85th anniversary of the automatic transmission. One station's rather ham-fisted execution featured physics content shoe-horned into GM product history. Two poor-condition examples of the 1940 Oldsmobile were adorned with hastily produced educational vinyl wraps on the topics of: Spontaneous Nuclear Decay (automatic transmission), and Organizing Elementary Particles (standard model).

Families looking for a hands-on experience were disappointed by the weak interaction aspect of the neutrino display, but attendees were welcome to leave with one half of a "Halloween Home Entanglement Kit". This souvenir was made available for those wishing to partake in the spooky action at a distance.

On the whole, "Spooky Action" was a well intentioned event, but somewhat of a hodge-podge due to external factors. With competing demands from sponsors, constraints from the venue operator, and expectations of parents, the organizers, perhaps understandably, had difficulty unifying the forces. (J.Dexter)

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Too funny for COMP's InterACTIONS, but not funny enough for the Red Journal's Letters to the Editor?
Submit to Dummy Source!
dummy.source@proton.me

Herein lies the promise of R. F. Venables, PhD, DABR, FAAPM



You have heard the promises of other QA tracker magnates, but their words are as brittle as last year's ice. I offer you no such trifles, but rather, I offer you dominion over chaos itself.

PHYSICISTS ARE BORN, NOT MADE

The science of QA tracking cannot be learned with practice, experience, nor scholarly pursuit. The true medical physicist is born with a fistful of checklists and spreadsheets! I was born in a Linac vault and reared by my technologist mother. As soon as my legs could bear my weight, I started to perform the daily beamchecker testing.

I have entered the QA tracking trade for two reasons only:
First - to satisfy my customers fully.

Second - to generate as much QA data as humanly possible.

My esteemed competitor, H. R. Roberts, cannot make the same claims. He is the spoiled son of a philosopher and a wet nurse, and his bearded foppery is a testament to his weak will. I have the utmost respect for my friend and competitor, but I will say with truth and honesty that while he has a taste for QA, he has no thirst for it.

I GUARANTEE THE LOWEST PRICE FOR MY SOFTWARE

I offer you my QA tracking software for your premium data at superior prices! How can I offer such an astounding rate for my products? Unlike my dear friend and rival H. R. Roberts, I do business with everyone, even the most unethical and corrupt. My buyers have been cast aside by polite society, and no reputable businessman would wish to be associated with them.

I TAKE NO PRIDE IN MY CLAIMS

I am not a boastful man, but I do not shy away from the truth. I have tracked bugs through forests and rivers of deprecated code. I have successfully imported data from every version of Excel in existence and have been able to properly populate my database. I have been out on the QA frontier while my colleague H. R. Roberts has been in his parlour, sipping weak tea and composing sonnets about "workflow optimisation". In this savage land, there are only two kinds of men: those who track, and those who perish. And I have not perished. (P.Watson)

Yours with high regard,

R. F. Venables, PhD, DABR, FAAPM
President, InsightQA

EVERYBODY LOVES RAY STATION



(J. DeCunha)

How much would you pay for an issue of
Dummy Source?

- a) \$100 CAD
- b) \$100 USD

To select your choice, please send the corresponding amount via etransfer to dummy.source@proton.me

Considering a career in STEM? Why not PHYS! Apply to in-demand jobs, such as:

- Physician
- Physicist
- Physiotherapist
- Phys Ed teacher



The Dummy Source Guide to Winter Sledding

By Kayla O'Sullivan-Steben

The question we've all asked at one point or another:
Which PDD makes the best sledding hill?

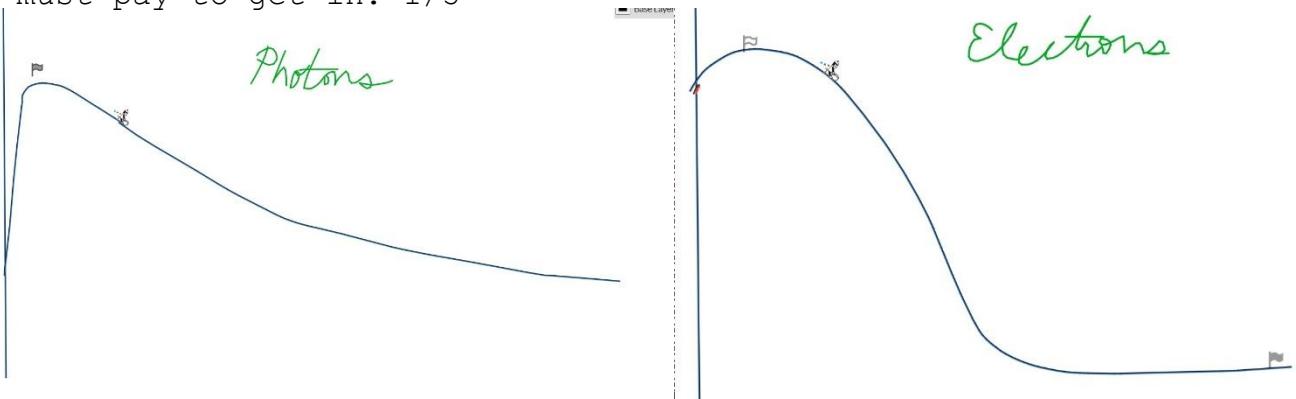
kVp Photons: Surface-level fun only. 2/5

Co-60: Classic slope, but the hill's been abandoned and nobody uses it. 3/5

MV Photons: Takes forever to build up, but delivers a reliable and smooth descent. 4/5

Electrons: Easy climb up, with a sharp and thrilling drop-off. 5/5

Protons: Mostly flat except for a dangerous spike at the end. Also, must pay to get in. 1/5



Essential Medical Physics Holiday Cocktail Recipes

Spice up your holiday party with these bespoke medical physics-themed cocktails! If the alcohol doesn't do it first, the drink names themselves should help start scintillating conversations.



CHERENKOV

A glowing blue, super-radiant cocktail.

Ingredients

1.5 oz vodka
1 oz blue curaçao
0.5 oz lemon juice
2 oz lemonade or lemon-lime soda (for clarity & glow)
Pinch of edible shimmer/glitter (silver or iridescent blue)
(Optional: splash of coconut water for texture)

Instructions

- 1) Add vodka, curaçao, and lemon juice to a shaker with ice.
- 2) Shake lightly, strain into a clear glass over fresh ice.
- 3) Top with lemonade or soda.
- 4) Stir in a tiny pinch of edible glitter right before serving.

(by A.Toltz, S.Hickling, A. Diamant and A.Alexandrian)

GEIGER-MUELLER

A sharp and reactive drink with a "clicky" presentation.

Ingredients

1.5 oz rye whiskey or mezcal (for a smoky, "ionizing" bite)
0.75 oz ginger liqueur (or ginger syrup)
0.5 oz fresh lime
2-3 oz club soda
A few pomegranate seeds or Pop Rocks candy for a "click" effect
(Optional: activated charcoal very tiny pinch for a gray haze)

Instructions

- 1) Shake whiskey/mezcal, ginger liqueur, and lime with ice.
- 2) Strain into a highball glass over ice.
- 3) Top with club soda.
- 4) Add pomegranate seeds or serve with Pop Rocks on the rim to create "detection events."

A high-intensity, short-duration cocktail with Fireball heat.

Ingredients

1.5 oz Fireball whiskey
1 oz apple cider or apple juice
0.5 oz cinnamon simple syrup (optional for sweetness)
1 oz bourbon (for extra "energy")
Splash of ginger beer

Instructions

- 1) Shake Fireball, bourbon, and apple cider with ice.
- 2) Strain into a rocks glass over ice.
- 3) Top with a small splash of ginger beer for a sharp "burst."
- 4) Add a very thin apple slice or cinnamon stick for garnish.

PHOTOELECTRIC EFFECT

A bright, golden, low-energy cocktail with a "kick" equal to incoming photon energy.

Ingredients

1.5 oz tequila reposado or light rum
1 oz honey syrup (1:1 honey + hot water)
0.75 oz lemon juice
0.25 oz ginger syrup or a slice of muddled ginger
(Optional: Gold luster dust for "photoelectron shimmer")

Instructions

- 1) Shake tequila, honey syrup, lemon, and ginger with ice.
- 2) Strain into a coupe or rocks glass.
- 3) Add just a tiny amount of gold luster dust for a warm, photoelectric glow.
- 4) Garnish with a lemon twist.



"It's like my high school coach always told me, you're only as good as your last newsletter"

A precisely calibrated gin & tonic.

Ingredients

2 oz high-quality gin (Hendrick's, Tanqueray, or similar)
4-5 oz premium tonic water
2 dashes of lime bitters or a precise 5 mL fresh lime juice
Thin lime wheel or cucumber ribbon

Instructions

- 1) Fill a chilled highball glass with ice (uniform cube size for "standardization").
- 2) Add 2 oz gin exactly.
- 3) Add tonic measured to maintain a 1:2.2 ratio (or to taste).
- 4) Add lime bitters or exact lime measurement.
- 5) Stir gently for 5 seconds – no more – to avoid over-dilution.



(A.Berry)

North American medical physics institutions disavow classic holiday films

In a move that is drawing ire from people who enjoy fun, several North American medical physics institutions have joined forces to put out a statement this weekend condemning the viewing of what many would call "classic" holiday films for being "scientifically belligerent", "medically inaccurate", and "just not very good". Further rationale for their decision to disavow certain films are presented below, taken directly from their statement.

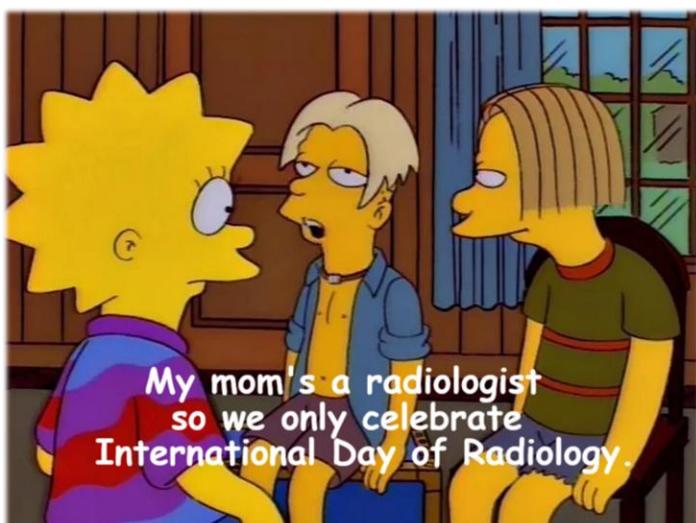
A Christmas Story: "The frozen pole-licking scene in this film gave a significant number of our members PTSD due to similar events that occurred in their childhood."

Home Alone & Home Alone 2: "While we can appreciate Kevin McCallister's industrious nature and creativity, we cannot in good conscience recommend a film with such disregard for personal safety and unrealistic depictions of bodily harm. A brick to the face would kill you."

It's a Wonderful Life: "The banker still wins in the long term. This made us sad."

The Polar Express: "Trains cannot do that, and neither can hot chocolate."

Ironically, they did not disavow the film **Scrooged**, which they said "was actually quite scientifically meritorious" and provided "a valuable thought experiment for curious minds". Additionally, they praised **A Very Harold and Kumar 3D Christmas** for presenting 3D in "an innovative way not seen since 2009's **Avatar**".
(T.Chernoff)



(P.Watson)



*While you were sleeping,
Dummy Source was getting stronger.*

Top Med Phys Holiday Movies:

Beam Hard

The Bolus Express

Phantom of the Bunker

The 4DCT Before Christmas

Silent Night, Deadly MU

The Grinch Who Stole Our Beam Model

Fifty Shades of Gray (Scale)

Bolus Story 2: The Thickening (A.Berry)

Rudolph, the 3D Bolus

A holiday classic for teaching children to accept all tissue equivalent materials despite their differences.

Lyrics:

You know superflab and aquaplast
and bees wax and brash mesh
Pink stuff and elasto-gel and
towels that are wet
But do you recall
The most famous bolus of all?

Rudolph the 3D bolus
Had a very custom fit
And if you ever saw it
You would want to start a print
All of the other boluses
Said "our buildup works just fine"
They never let poor Rudolph
Show off his 3D design

Then one foggy Christmas Eve
A physicist came to say:
"Ruldoph, we've got an irregular site,
Won't you boost some skin dose
tonight?"

Then how the physicists loved him
And they shouted out with glee
"Rudolph the 3D bolus,
You'll go down in history!"
(K.O'Sullivan-Steben)



The Beam Not Tested

(apologies to Robert Frost)

Two beams diverged in a cyclotron vault,
And sorry I could not QA both
And be one physicist, long did I halt
And hoped there'd be no beam fault
(luckily, physicists don't swear the Hippocratic Oath);

It happened that the SOBP did not comply
Why is proton dosimetry so intense?
Two beams diverged in a cyclotron vault, and I-
I used TG 224 to verify,
And that has made all the difference. (P.Watson)



This Christmas, give the only truly tissue equivalent CT phantom: *The P'ham'tom*.

As soon as your holiday QA is over, *The P'ham'tom* is ready to be served. Can be sliced helically or axially.

"It's clinically delicious!"
(P.Watson)

What's your Medical Physics name?

Using your birthdate, discover your true medical physics name!

| Month | Day | | |
|-----------|---------------------|---------------|--------------|
| January | Dosimetry | 1 Simulation | 16 Filter |
| February | Treatment Planning | 2 System | 17 Source |
| March | Monte Carlo | 3 Tomography | 18 Kernel |
| April | QA | 4 Ratio | 19 Matrix |
| May | Conformal | 5 Resolution | 20 Profile |
| June | Brachytherapy | 6 Therapy | 21 Scatter |
| July | Intensity-modulated | 7 Calibration | 22 Output |
| August | Magnetic resonance | 8 Accelerator | 23 Index |
| September | Bragg-Gray | 9 Phantom | 24 Spectrum |
| October | FLASH | 10 Standards | 25 Modulator |
| November | Proton | 11 Imaging | 26 Dosimeter |
| December | Electron | 12 Cavity | 27 Gradient |
| | | 13 Control | 28 Algorithm |
| | | 14 Chamber | 29 Modality |
| | | 15 Beam | 30 Tracker |
| | | | 31 Monitor |

(P.Watson)

(Ed. note - if you want to keep your birthday a secret, don't tell people your medical physics name)



Rando Unchained

Legend speaks of an ancient phantom who roams the linac bunkers on the final day of December, when all QAs converge: daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly, and annual, aligning like some cursed cosmic calibration.

Physicists unlucky enough to still be working on December 31 swear they hear slow, deliberate footsteps echoing through the bunker walls.

Whenever a linac's output goes "hot" over time, the official explanation is always beam drift.

But the elders whisper:

"It's Rando... warming himself under the flattening filter." (A.Berry)

Personal Advertisements

Diagnostic Imaging Physicist (M, 28), new in town and looking for a partner in crime. I like piña coladas and long walks through DICOM headers. If you like discussing image quality metrics over mexican food, message me. No hookups.

Attractive and single **Nuclear Medicine Physicist** (F, 32) seeking life partner. Must not be afraid of commitment, or Tc-99m.

Therapy Physicist (M, 55) seeking cute dosimetrist (F, 18 to 24). Must enjoy being mansplained to about how a waveguide works. Prior experience as a model or hostess at a cocktail bar is an asset.

Things we're grateful for

Here at Dummy Source, sometimes we need to take a step back and appreciate the things we have, rather than complain about what we don't. This season, we're especially grateful for:

- Family
- Mentors and teachers
- Our institution's IT team for blocking gmail, google drive, google docs & sheets, making us feel Safe and Secure, and not at all inconvenienced
- The same IT team forcing us to change our password every 3 months (and by "change", I mean increment the number at the end of my current password by 1), ensuring that a data breach is nigh impossible
- Friends

(P.Watson)

Spike TV greenlights pilot for new series, 1000 Ways to Lie

Do you remember SPIKE TV? Of course you do. Who could forget its classic slogan: "SPIKE: the channel for MEN. Make sure you put men in all caps. But not that part that I was just telling you, that shouldn't be part of the quote."

You've also read the title of this article. You're probably thinking to yourself "1000 Ways to Lie? What, like, to lie in a bed?" Well, YES! If you followed that train of thought, then you are qualified to be a SPIKE TV executive. The new TV series, spun off of the classic hit show 1000 Ways to Die (which everyone watched) examines the various ways to lie in different types of beds. The series was greenlit for a six-episode run, with each episode focusing on a different bed, including: spring beds, foam beds, water beds, beds of nails, and tanning beds, and radiotherapy beds (aka couches).

Various medical physicists were consulted on the project. When asked for comment, one consulting physicist in the Montreal area stated the following: "They gave me \$2000 to be on camera for 5 minutes. So I said yeah, sure, I'll do it."

In a clip from the latest episode, one physicist can be seen slapping the top of the linac couch while stating "this baby can fit so many degrees of freedom inside." When asked precisely how many, the physicist said "well, six." A brief silence followed, before the physicist frowned and left the room.

When asked about their thoughts on accusations made against Spike TV for stereotypically being known for misogynistic content, a physicist (who wished to remain nameless) stated that they were "not aware of such allegations" before sprinting from the room in what could only be described as a Naruto run.

Now, if you're in Spike TV's marketing department, you might be thinking: "The show is called 1000 Ways to Lie... Won't people think this is some sort of series about liars? Like, guilty convicts who got acquitted by dubious means? Hucksters? Con artists? General rapscallions? LIARS?!"

We reached out to Spike TV for comment on this matter, before receiving a cease and desist order. (T.Chernoff)

*please note that this article was written before the show's cancellation on December 2, 2025. The timeslot is now filled with reruns of season 2 of "The Cleveland Show".

**please also note that the author of this satirical article was unaware that a very real spinoff series called 1000 Ways to Lie was in fact real and did indeed premier on Spike TV in 2010. It was not about beds. It was indeed about liars.



Dummy Sounds Presents: These Magnetic Moments

The pop and holiday parody album you didn't know you needed, until now! Think Weird Al meets Bill Nye the Science Guy. (J.Dexter)



Sensible Chuckles
By Pete Watson

How does an MD become an author on another MD's paper? They pass each other in the hallway.

The Knights of Columbus are having an online sale of "Keep Christ in Christmas" buttons. Use coupon code XMAS2025 at checkout.

Why do Santa's jokes land so well? Because he workshops his material.

Q: What did the medical physicist say on Halloween?
A: Image or treat!

Q: What did the medical physicist shout about the runaway cadaver?
A: Cesium and barium! (J. Dexter)

Q: What direction are patient setup errors most common in the Fall time?
A: In the Sup direction *said like soup* (J. DeCunha)



If your New Year's resolutions are spatial, contrast, and temporal, you deserve a break from image quality analysis.

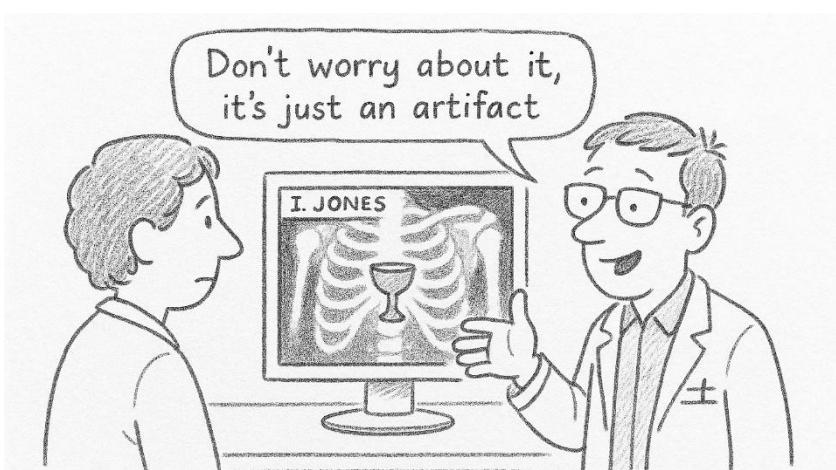
COMPLAINTS DEPARTMENT
By Trey Chernoff

The following section contains complaints submitted willingly (and unwillingly) by disgruntled medical physicists who are just trying to get by in this modern world.

"I tried to engage a colleague in a discussion about the electronic cross section attenuation coefficient, μ . They told me to go to Australia 😞."
(Ed.note: this terrible pun about emus should go straight to jail, which Australia knows all about).

"When putting up my family's Christmas tree, I called the star a pentagram (which is a correct definition of the shape) and got angry looks from everyone the rest of the night."

"My partner wanted some gold earrings as a present, and I told them that californium would be a much smarter investment. Now I'm sleeping on the couch."



(P.Watson)

Top eight signs that you peaked in graduate school

By Pete Watson

- 1) You refer to your mid to late 20s as "the golden years".
- 2) You find a way to shoehorn your grad school achievements into every conversation. Just because you were a Rhodes scholar, that doesn't need to be your entire personality.
- 3) You're still obsessed with your grad school sweetheart (who is currently your spouse).
- 4) You keep trying to organise a grad school reunion.
- 5) The school that you graduated from is much more prestigious than the institution you currently work at.
- 6) You still use your grad school email address, and get annoyed when people send things to your gmail address instead.
- 7) All of your anecdotes start with "when I was in grad school..."
- 8) You haven't published a first author paper since you graduated.

Nuggets of Wisdom

by Pete Watson

If you play the bass in an acid jazz group, are you neutral? If so, this brings a whole new meaning to buffering music.

My girlfriend wanted to start a jazz group with me and her four friends, but I said no because I don't believe in premarital sextets

Never assume that your colleague's halloween costume is "slutty medical physicist."

Two turtle doves? In this economy?

I read a really good article explaining when it's grammatically correct to say "fewer" instead of "less". Now I'm fewer confused.

Pan's Laughter is funny, Pan's Labyrinth is not, and Panslaughter is where you accidentally kill a man with a skillet.

Asking a graduate student what plotting software they use to make their figures is the same as asking a celebrity who they're wearing.



*Coming up in the next issue of Dummy Source - **The Dose Issue!***

12 Send your submissions to dummy.source@proton.me by 30 March 2026