



Skeptics Guide to the Universe & Exaltation of Larks present

NOT A CONSPIRACY!



There is no conspiracy at NotACon! Probably.

There are rumors, however, of a clandestine group operating at the highest levels of NotACon. Your task is to infiltrate this group by solving puzzles and discovering a final task.

This packet includes five puzzles. Each puzzle has a single-word solution, and those five answer words, in order, will spell a message indicating where to look next.

The first solvers who complete the final task by the end of NotACon will receive a special prize.

Good luck!

Ground Rules

1. Participants are encouraged to work in teams to solve the puzzles.
2. Answers to the five main puzzles may be checked by going to bit.ly/notaconspiracy, or scanning the QR code below.
3. If you are stuck and don't know what to do next, talk to Brian.
4. The final task will become clear on Saturday night.
5. Reference materials, including search engines and the internet, may be used as solving aids.
6. The spirit of fair play is expected throughout. If you find a hidden puzzle, please don't tamper with it. Don't spoil puzzles for other people.
7. There's **nothing special** or interesting on the back of this page, no hidden puzzles anywhere else, no secret messages embedded in anything at all (especially not in this list of ground rules), no reason to pay close attention to anything that happens while you're here in search of encoded phrases that might have to do with conspiracies that don't exist. And finding these extra puzzles that don't exist won't give you any kind of clue about the final answer to the main puzzles because there are no conspiracies and you should be skeptical of anyone that tells you anything otherwise. Obviously.





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I. ENTRANCE EXAM

Begin with a test? A capital idea!

1. Derive the optimal enthalpy of anaphylaxis for an inorganic solution, assuming the cylindrical vessel containing the solution rests on an oblate spheroid of infinite radius. Indicate your assumptions and directly explicate the morphology of your answer.
2. Verify the following aphetic statement: a cuprate Josephson oscillator in a sapphire bath will stop halfway through its precession. In your analysis, assume a top-heavy Fermi constant with no metaphase.
3. Demonstrate a simple universal principle connecting morphemic complexity with aperiodic elasticity. Explain how this principle applies to systems exhibiting superconductivity.
4. Working with the assumption that quantum effects should be neglected, show that a sharp helical dampener can exhibit thermodynamic equilibrium. Offer a reason for why this would not work for a toroidal dampener in a lithium bath at atmospheric pressure.
5. Respond to the following: all subphyla of zoophilic bacteriophages are prokaryotic. Don't assume that cellulose is siphoned from the system.
6. Calculate the power radiated by a frictionless supersymmetric sphere rolling on a graphite plane in five spatial dimensions. Once you've done that, explain how your answer would change in a non-Euclidean spacetime triangulated by Markov junctions.
7. Using the Zeroth Law of Thermodynamics, demonstrate that there are no loopholes in Ehrenfest's famous rejection of Boltzmann's Theorem. Next, explain how to drop half of your assumptions without changing the result.
8. To first order in the weak coupling constant, explain how one can trap hydrogen and alpha particles at finite temperature in a non-conducting overdoped medium. Be careful not to assume that you can neglect gravitational effects!
9. Your next task: using the Third Law of Robotics, build a dimorphic artificial intelligence via Machine Language. The construction must have a Turing-complete graph without in-step hardwiring.
10. "Hadrons are comprised of six flavors of quarks, where the top has the greatest quark mass and the up has the lowest." Explain how this statement necessarily implies that the corresponding Goldstone bosons arising from chiral symmetry breaking can be used to color-swap hadronic superjets.
11. Applying your knowledge of philosophy of mind, prove that there are no *a posteriori* formal fallacies in Russell and Whitehead's *Principia Mathematica*. Construct an equivalent logical system from Hume's approach without taking an explicitly Kantian stance.
12. In a strict microeconomic formalism, show that the Central Limit Theorem necessarily implies that any effects of Modern Monetary Theory are demonstrably ephemeral and cannot be used to reach a Nash equilibrium in any known competition, ideal or otherwise. Do not assume there are any deep-held phase alignments amongst competitors, and be careful not to invoke the Axiom of Choice!
13. Identify and classify all possible types of strongly coupled systems that originate from digraphically paired particles in quantum field theories. Take a Wilsonian approach and use the renormalization group, holding the energy of your system stationary at twenty Joules, assuming Dirichlet conditions without propagating photons.
14. You're almost done: for your final question, explain how (while upholding Moore's Law) one can build an NP-encipherable quantum computer.

2. CONNECTING THE DOTS

Even the most far-fetched linkages can periodically turn out to be real, in a number of ways.

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3. SAGE ADVICE



It's a room full of science experts, each following their own rules.

GRUGIARLGUAGAMOLREGOMPENRT

IEHABITANTSLEEEOLEEBEACKLEERECKLEECETYLEEEOLEESEOVETOPLEEPERTSLEE

FORTYWEBLIKETHIRTYDOILYFIFTEENFABRIC

PPETRIDPISHSPUBSTRATEMPADEFPROMAPLGAE

FORMEROFSPEAKEROSOF00THE0THOUSE0HGINGRICHOG

KOBIMUGKELIBATEGEV

TYCOMPANTEONCTNKNOWTSATETHTOTOKYTSTELECOMMUNICATIONTDANTGENEERIN
TNCORPORATIO

MAUTICALSERMEORSHEKEFTRIDENFZUESSEL

ELMICHAEYKINSLEDCREATISTHNEONLINEMAGAZI

TOOPPLRUSEPPDRTPPORBREAPPKRUPPPRSOIPPLR

WASTÖTETZWEIVÖGEL

IEMMSSINGGFOMMTISSLSTTWOWEREEWENNWYYHWW

IENVYGISLOTHGIORGIPRIDEG

TYPENOFNPROSENEPICNORIGINATINGNINNICELANDN

UHTENNISYTIGHTENYOUSETWOBEEUHHUGHESTINWAT



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4. UNIVERSAL CONSTANT

Skeptics are everywhere!

Instrument primarily played by the Beatle supposedly dead in 1966

Assassin who conspiratorially said "The doctors killed Garfield—I just shot him"

Narrative principle that says a loaded weapon introduced in a plot must go off (and which is violated in the purported author's very own *The Cherry Orchard*)

At the coronation of King Charles, 78-year-old Welsh composer Karl Jenkins was accused of being Megan Markle in this *Wizard of Oz* female lead (rumored to have been drugged during filming), at birth

Low-mpg vehicle, colloquially (a tax on which was suspected to be hidden in the Affordable Care Act)

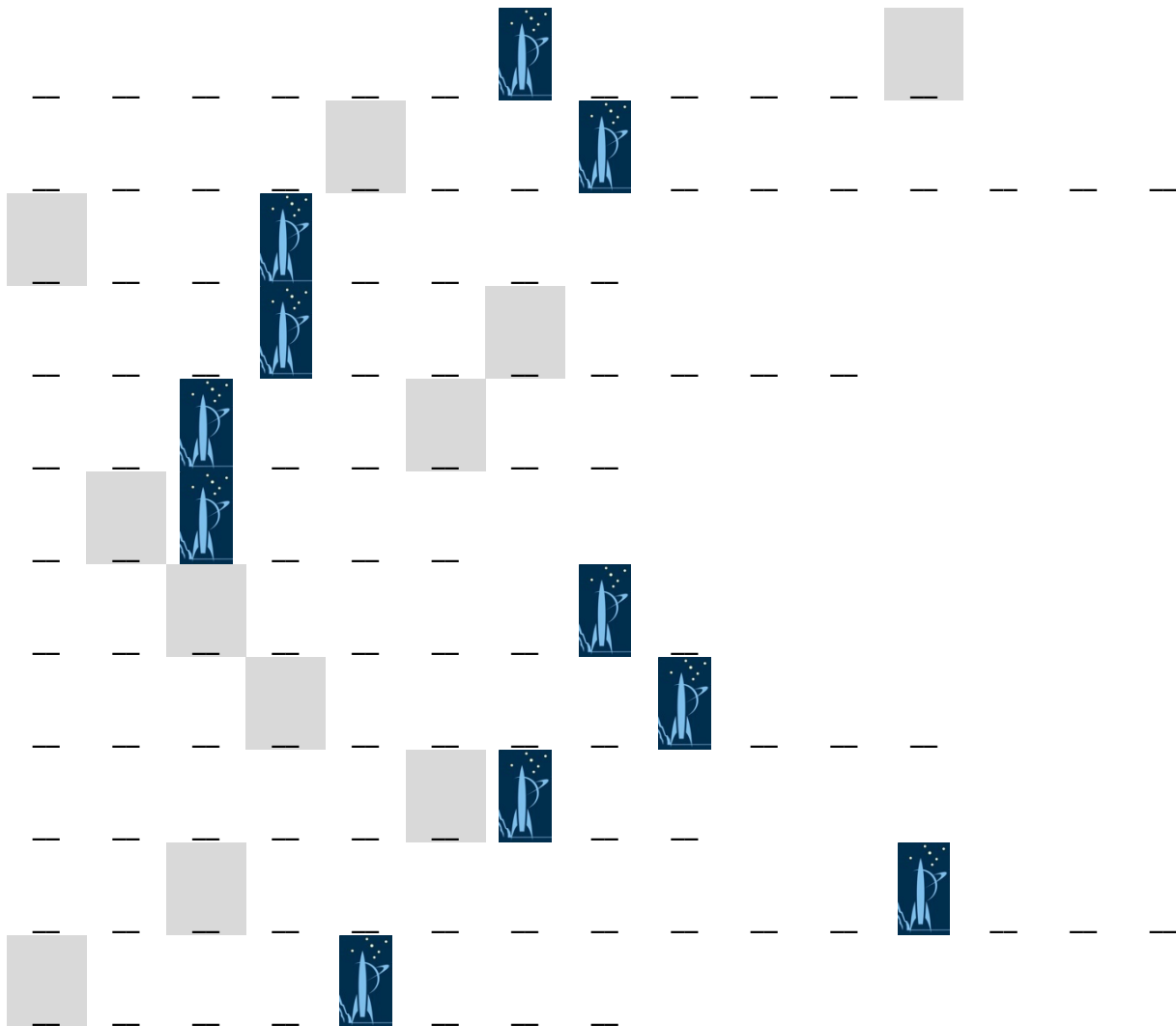
Despite Western European claims, he didn't actually create the world's first printed book

Title held by Michelle Cohn

Union that is joined with the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists

Symptom of PTSD experienced by those who lived through a disaster when others did not

Vatican armed force commanded by Alois Estermann (whose murder is the subject of conspiracy theories)



5. CIRCULAR REASONING

When your brain is going in circles, even the most straightforward thoughts end up scrambled.

Outer Ring

- A. Skeptic like Descartes or Spinoza
- B. Skeptic or press conference participant
- C. Skeptic in the Bible (2 wds.)
- D. Skeptic like James Randi
- E. Skeptic who is pessimistic

Spokes

1. Soviet counter-intelligence agency also fictionalized in James Bond books
2. Pulverizes, as potatoes
3. Horseshoe makers, for short
4. Second-largest branch of Islam
5. Felipe Alou's Silver Slugger son
6. Aerosmith classic "Stop ___ Around"
7. "When you ____, you make an..."
8. Shellfish often served steamed in wine
9. Nap, in Nogales
10. Liabilities' opposites
11. Word before quo or symbol
12. Leg-building exercises
13. Brings out a smile in
14. "Open ___!"
15. Written homework assignments, often
16. Fungi for bakers and brewers
17. Leader Joseph who coined the name in entry 1
18. Hawk's claws
19. Bask on the beach
20. Pride and Prejudice author
21. Cheech or Chong, famously
22. Contraction in the subtitle of Kelly Clarkson's "Stronger"
23. Adjective for training performed in the workplace (hyph.)
24. Brings together
25. Certain population statistic
26. Convention souvenir, sometimes (hyph.)
27. Euphrates's sister river
28. Kite-flyer's need
29. Slob's room, metaphorically
30. Person at a keyboard
31. Area under a fireplace grate
32. Pidgin or creole
33. Prison in a Johnny Cash song
34. Natural bath sponges (var.)
35. Stringy, like some dental care items
36. Boxers Patterson and Mayweather
37. Mister of ice cream truck fame
38. Words on a greatest hits album title (2 wds.)
39. Have no ___ (dislike) (2 wds.)
40. Largest city in California's Central Valley
41. Not tref
42. Many Marvel characters
43. More swanky
44. Ruler entombed in the Great Pyramid
45. Fish-eating raptor
46. Part of VIP
47. Actress Turner of "Game of Thrones"
48. Geologic time periods

