

# HARPER'S

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**THIS LAND IS NOT YOUR LAND**

Deciding Who Belongs in America

*By Ted Genoways*

**KABUBBLE**

Counting Down to Economic Collapse in the Afghan Capital

*By Matthieu Aikins*

**THE BLOODLINE OF THE ALKANAS**

*A story by Cynthia Ozick*

*Also: Tom Bissell and Garry Winogrand*

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## FINDINGS

**T**he Centre for the Study of Existential Risk warned lest humanity become complacent about a robot uprising; physicists designed a computer simulation whereby it may be possible to determine whether we are living in a computer simulation designed by our posthuman descendants; and scientists established that humans with circadian-rhythm genotype AA or AG tend to die just before 11:00 A.M., whereas type GGs tend to die just before 6:00 P.M. A Canadian student sued her university for failing to accommodate her allergies to cactuses, escalators, tall people, and mauve. A peanut-shaped asteroid was headed toward Earth. The Cretaceous–Paleogene Extinction Event was found to have killed *Obamadon*. No new poisons were found in Tycho Brahe’s beard. German scientists used satellites to track 1,500 crab-days of activity among giant roaming robber crabs, Australian scientists observed that innocent fish wander out of their reserves into a 150-meter naïveté radius, and fluid-dynamics researchers concluded that huddling penguins, though self-interested, share heat equitably. Australia’s government was using termites to look for gold. In Grapeland, Texas, a ring-tailed lemur named Keanu attacked a postwoman named Reeves. North Korean archaeologists confirmed the discovery of a unicorn lair. The Space and Naval Warfare Systems Command announced the Navy’s plans to reduce its reliance on dolphin and sea-lion labor. MIT researchers found that drone operators perform better when minor distractions alleviate monotony. “War,” said a former Predator squadron commander, “is long periods of boredom punctuated by moments of sheer terror.”

**I**sraeli children who experience difficulty distinguishing fantasy from reality suffer more intense nighttime fears; researchers suggested such children be given guardianship of a plush huggy puppy. Day care was linked to a 50 percent greater chance of obesity, and bouncy-castle

injuries were climbing ever higher. PTSD in soldiers may develop from the traumas not of combat but of childhood. Childhood abuse damages DNA and, in African-American women, also predicts adult-onset asthma. Sadness is more prevalent among artsy teenagers. Rich children are better at filtering out irrelevant stimuli. Happy adolescents become richer adults. Summer babies are less likely to grow up to be CEOs. Smart children are less likely in adulthood to report chronic widespread pain. Autistic children take longer to learn to be afraid of new things. Many Swedish children who self-harm don’t really mean it. Lying increases the temperature of the nose. A wandering mind shortens one’s telomeres. Fetuses yawn.

**M**aterials scientists successfully predicted hydrogen embrittlement and hoped to create silk from the slime of hagfish. Neurobiologists created white smell. Dogs were found to exhibit no inherent shape biases, and Canadians were found likelier to spend money that looks dirty. Biochemists blocked the gene that allows fruit flies to perceive the gentle stroking of a human eyelash. British doctors urged the standardization of terminology and patient-orientation materials for such designer-vagina procedures as labiaplasty, hymenoplasty, and hoodectomy. Downward-facing flowers, compared with horizontal flowers, require 10 percent more energy expenditure from hummingbirds. Hip injuries are widespread among swans. Traditional salespitching was dying out in Britain. English may be a Scandinavian language. The magic number may be four. Mistletoe may kill colon cancer. Carp at Czech Christmas markets align themselves along a north-south axis. The North Star is 30 percent closer to Earth than previously thought, and all but 5 percent of the universe’s stars have already been born. Scientists concluded that it is particularly important to store box wine in a cool place. ■

*“Origin 6, 7, 8 (Meteor Crater), Arizona, United States,” gelatin silver prints with selenium toning, by Stan Gaz. Courtesy the artist and ClampArt, New York City*