



Subject: Postterminaries – thank you for your consideration

Bulletin@mrs.org

MRS Bulletin announces its **OPEN CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS** to Postterminaries, the column where you can always write a piece “replete with rich irony and subtle allusion.”* Author qualification: Must have a quirky mind.

Description: Light commentary and observations relating to anything of interest to the MRS Bulletin readership. Topic must have a materials angle. Word play is a plus.

Length: 0.0625–1 page ... well, okay, 2 pages if warranted.

Format of submission: Email as a Word document to Bulletin@mrs.org.

Examples: www.mrs.org/postterminaries

*MRS Bull. XIX (6), 72 (1994)

...iditate for the experime...
...me, and contemplate the optimism that...
...took to undertake it before the result...
...was known.

“How many of you
have done an
experiment “just to see
what happens?”

Pessimism has its place, too. You need
just the right amount of pessimism, and
the sense to apply it appropriately.
Analyzing your data should be done with
a pessimistic skepticism, for you must
know that at least your own level of skep-
ticism will be applied in the reviewing
process after you submit the work for

Less is more:

A holey grail of materials

We have known for a long time that it is possi-
ble to make something out of the right kind of nothing. I should
like to bat that I am not discussing nothingness in the sense
of Isaac Asimov Memorial Debate on “The Existence of No-
thing.”¹ I will leave that for another
street-fight surrounding that debate.² I will leave that for another
along with discussions of the Casimir effect,³ other vacuum engi-
neering effects, and effects that might lead to discussions of less than nothing.
Instead, I am discussing the nothingness (from the atomic scale to the mac-
roscopic scale) of vacancies, voids, porosity, structured holes, aerogel,
nanofoms,⁴ clusters of vacancies, voids, porosity, structured holes, aerogel,
nanofoms are made of that are more familiar to materials researchers.

silicon carbide
with aluminum alloy
stiff like winter’s win-

David Weiss

Toying with science



Girls’ toys have a lousy reputation when
it comes to science. Kids for a science career. In our pre-
vious lives, I mostly dabbled in arts and crafts
games, while our brothers honed their tech-

...ity of exceptionally
...table bits that were independent
...morally within a particular show. I
...bring *Seinfeld* into this because, in the
...short space allocated for this piece, I can-
...not do the topic of “nothing” justice.
...Instead, I wish to point out examples of
...“nothing” in the sciences and to challenge
...readers to find their own.

The first clearly defined
metric based on the absence
of something that comes
to my mind is the concept
of a mean free path between
gas-molecule collisions.

The first clearly defined metric based on
the absence of something that comes to my
mind is the concept of a mean free path
between gas-molecule collisions. A dis-
tance of length over which nothing hap-
pens—how does one get students excited
about such an important technical

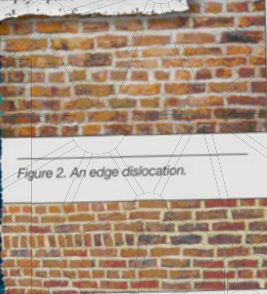


Figure 2. An edge dislocation.

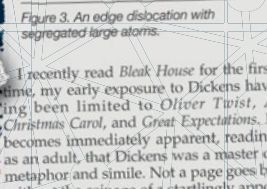


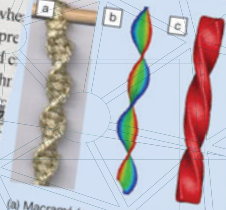
Figure 3. An edge dislocation with segregated large atoms.



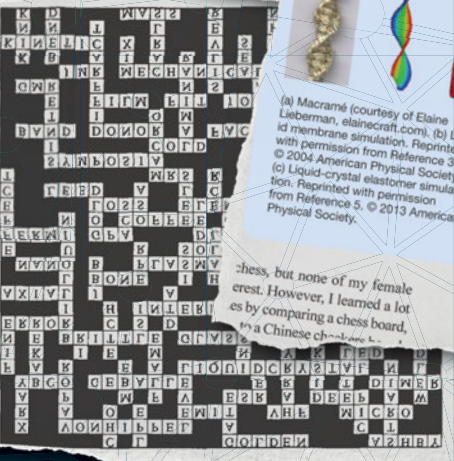
Figure 4. An edge dislocation.



Figure 5. An edge dislocation.



(a) Macramé (courtesy of Elaine Lieberman, elainecraft.com). (b) Lipid membrane simulation. Reprinted with permission from Reference 3. © 2004 American Physical Society. (c) Liquid-crystal elastomer simulation. Reprinted with permission from Reference 5. © 2013 American Physical Society.



...ness, but none of my female
...erest. However, I learned a lot
...es by comparing a chess board,
...a Chinese chess board.

The Lesser-Mass Diet

If eating bread is wrong, I don’t want to be right (borrowed—and mangled—with apologies, from Luther Ingram’s 1972 hit song “If Loving You Is Wrong, I Don’t Want to Be Right”). This philosophy has led me to fail at the Atkins Diet and other

To the doubters among you, I followed the LMD for the last 20 years. In shape, if you believe, like the ancients, it is the perfect shape. (Plato would no do