The Acceptance Speeches
transcribed by Jim Eakins, Improbable Research staff

These are the acceptance speeches given by the 2016 Ig Nobel Prize winners. A few exceeded the one-minute time limit, a fact that was brought to the winners’ attention by the tripartite Human Alarm Clock. (The Human Alarm Clock was composed of three of the chorus singers, each wearing a clock costume from the opera “The Last Second,” doing double duty during the ceremony.)

ECONOMICS PRIZE
Awarded to Mark Avis, Sarah Forbes, and Shelagh Ferguson, for assessing the perceived personalities of rocks from a sales and marketing perspective.

Sarah Forbes: Well, thank you guys so much for this. This is actually a huge honor for us. What can I say, the Ig Nobel rocks. But, yea, so basically for us we would like to actually thank Marketing Theory for actually publishing this. And, yea, and Pauline Maclaran is the editor there, fantastic, she actually took us on. But yes, it was an amusing study, but we are very proud of it and hope you enjoy reading it.

PHYSICS PRIZE
Awarded to Gábor Horváth, Miklós Blahó, György Kriska, Ramón Hegedüs, Balázs Geric, Róbert Farkas, Susanne Åkesson, Péter Malik, and Hansruedi Wildermuth, for discovering why white-haired horses are the most horsefly-proof horses, and for discovering why dragonflies are fatally attracted to black tombstones.

Susanne Åkesson: Thank you, thank you very much for this award. I feel very honored to represent our team of nine people. And it’s been really exciting because I’m the biologist, and the rest are mainly in physics. But, this is the way science goes, so we found in fact that you’d rather be a white horse than a black one, if you’d like to avoid being bitten by horseflies. But in fact, you can also dress either in stripes like a zebra, or like myself in a dotted coat, that will also help. And, it is time to stop.

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**THE ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES** [continued]

**MEDICINE PRIZE**

Awarded to Christoph Helmchen, Carina Palzer, Thomas Münte, Silke Anders, and Andreas Sprenger, for discovering that if you have an itch on the left side of your body, you can relieve it by looking into a mirror and scratching the right side of your body (and vice versa).

Christoph Helmchen: Hello everybody. Who here ever had a bad itch? Oh, not that much? Imagine you have an itch side on the right arm, and what are you doing? You scratch. After a certain time, the itching comes again, and you scratch. And you scratch, and you scratch, and certain time, your skin bleeds, and you know you shouldn’t scratch any more. What to do? You cheat your brain. You take a mirror, look into the mirror, and see your left arm by the mirror, and your brain perceives it as the right arm. And if you scratch your left arm, you will have an itch relief. That’s it. And now I want to give ‘thank you’s to all my previous teachers, who have made the basis for all this research possible and uh… ok [HUMAN ALARM CLOCK BEGINS TO DING]… that’s ok. Thank you.

**PSYCHOLOGY PRIZE**

Awarded to Evelyne Dehez, Maarten De Schryver, Gordon Logan, Kristina Suchotzki, and Bruno Verschuere, for asking a thousand liars how often they lie, and for deciding whether to believe those answers.

Bruno Verschuere: Being a clinical psychologist, I really like the US presidential elections. I mean both Clinton and Trump have been called pathological liars. But what does that mean? When does one become a pathological liar? In order to define lying as pathological, you first need to know the normal rate of lying. And so we asked a thousand people to honestly tell us how often they lie. People lie on average 2.2 times per day. Old people are the most honest of all, and I am glad to see so many honest people on the stage here tonight. So our study tells that if Clinton and Trump lie one to five times a day, they’re just average liars like all of us. Thank you.

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*Psychology Prize winner Bruno Verschuere receives his prize from Nobel laureate Roy Glauber. Photo: Alexey Eliseev.*

*Eric Workman helps Nobel laureates Dudley Herschbach and Eric Maskin demonstrate the research that was honored with the medicine prize. Photo: Howard I. Cannon.*

*Eric Workman, Eric Maskin, and a feather. Photo: Howard I. Cannon.*
THE ACCEPTANCE SPEECHES [continued]

PEACE PRIZE
Awarded to Gordon Pennycook, James Allan Cheyne, Nathaniel Barr, Derek Koehler, and Jonathan Fugelsang for their scholarly study called “On the Reception and Detection of Pseudo-Profound Bullshit.”

Gordon Pennycook: Thank you, thank you, thank you. We would like to first thank the organizers for such a wonderful celebration of truly profound, but still unmitigated, bullshit. We also thank the University of Waterloo and NSER for funding us, and also Jonathan Baron, The Journal of [Judgment and] Decision Making, for publishing our paper despite the profanity. And finally we’d like to thank all those who inspired us, such as: Deepak Chopra, Dr. Oz, Oprah, whoever wrote “The Secret,” Donald Trump, Stephen Harper, every politician ever, and the entire lineup of FOX News, MSNBC, CNN. We would like to thank tobacco lobbyists, those who deny climate change and evolution, my uncle Ted. Your quantum vibrations permeate the transcendence essence of the true experience and coalesce into our bullshit paper. Thank you!

BIOLOGY PRIZE
Awarded jointly to Charles Foster, for living in the wild as, at different times, a badger, an otter, a deer, a fox, and a bird; and to Thomas Thwaites, for creating prosthetic extensions of his limbs that allowed him to move in the manner of, and spend time roaming hills in the company of, goats.

Charles Foster: We have five glorious senses. Normally we use only one of them, vision. It’s a very distorting lens because it is linked to our cognition. And that means that we get only about twenty percent of the information that we squeeze out of this extraordinary world. Animals, by and large, do a good deal better. And in an attempt to see woods as they really are, without that distorting lens of vision and cognition, I tried to follow five non-human species, badger, foxes, otters, red deer, and, ridiculously, swifts. It increased my understanding of what their landscapes are really like, rather than landscapes colored by all our colonial impressions of what those landscapes should be like, and it also generated in me a good deal of empathy for these animals, and we can do with a little more of that. Thank you very much.

Thomas Thwaites: Hi everyone. Whoa! Yeah, this is a huge honor, thank you very much. So I got tired of all the worry and pain of being a human, and so I decided to take a holiday from it all and become a goat. And I was helped in this endeavor by lots of people. The Wellcome Trust, thank you very much; Professor John Hutchinson from the Royal Veterinary College; Dr. Glyn Heath from Southford University; Dr. Joe Devlin, neuroscientist from UCL; Dr. Alan McElligott, goat behavior expert from Queen Mary University; and oh god, I’ve forgotten… [HUMAN ALARM CLOCK DINGS] Thank you very much!
LITERATURE PRIZE
Awarded to Fredrik Sjöberg, for his three-volume autobiographical work about the pleasures of collecting flies that are dead, and flies that are not yet dead.

Fredrik Sjöberg: Male entomologists around the world know that it is impossible to make an impression on women with dead insects. Charles Darwin definitely did, even Edward O. Wilson knew about this problem as a young man. But, the very best thing about science is there is always a risk, or possibility of being wrong. I wrote about collecting hoverflies, knowing this would not impress anyone, especially not women, and I was wrong. Thank you, thank you.

PERCEPTION PRIZE
Awarded to Atsuki Higashiyama and Kohei Adachi, for investigating whether things look different when you bend over and view them between your legs.

Atsuki Higashiyama: Good evening. First, I want to show demonstration by myself. [bends over to look between legs]. In my paper awarded, we studied perceived size and perceived distance of object when the viewer is inverted, like when peering through legs. When looking at an object from this inverted position, the depth between objects appear more shrunk, and the objects appear smaller compared to normal upright posture. Okay. Small and shrink, take it home, okay? Small and shrink, okay.