THE LAWS OF MURPHY AND FINAGLE

RESTRICTED TO SENIORS

This course is intended primarily for those of you who are preparing to start work on your senior and graduate thesis and who are not yet acquainted with the basic laws of scientific experimentation. Doubtless, many begin to suspect these laws and may even begin using some of the more important tools of this science in laboratory practice, but a thorough grounding in the concepts is necessary for complete understanding.

What is now considered to have been the most important study of the real universe was begun by one John Finagle '69 and the first editor of Voo Doo. He undertook for his senior thesis to prove this proposition:

If a string has one end, then it also has another end!

At first glance this theorem may seem to be trivial, but if broad enough interpretations are applied to the words "string" and "end", it will be found to express the "togetherness" of the entire real universe.

After graduation, J. Finagle joined forces with Dr. Murphy of Cal-Tech and together they published the most celebrated paper known in any field of science. Below are the laws of Murphy and Finagle in their revised form, as well as a brief discussion of the various rules for adjusting data.

The first and probably the most widely known law is:

In an experiment, if anything can go wrong, it will!

Further research under a joint Foocom and Anarcom grant expanded the law to be all embracing and universally applicable:

If anything can go wrong, it will!

This is merely a concise statement of the Innate Perversity of Inanimate Matter. Well known examples include the rainstorm just after you washed the car; the experiment which just wouldn't work unless the lab instructor was looking, and the fact that toast always falls buttered side down. A useful corollary of this law is:

Everything will go wrong all at once!

A law which many have discovered for themselves but which is rarely so clearly expressed is:

If it looks easy, it's tough.

If it looks tough, it's damn well impossible, or intuitively obvious!

Once you begin working with your own or other expensive equipment you will discover that:

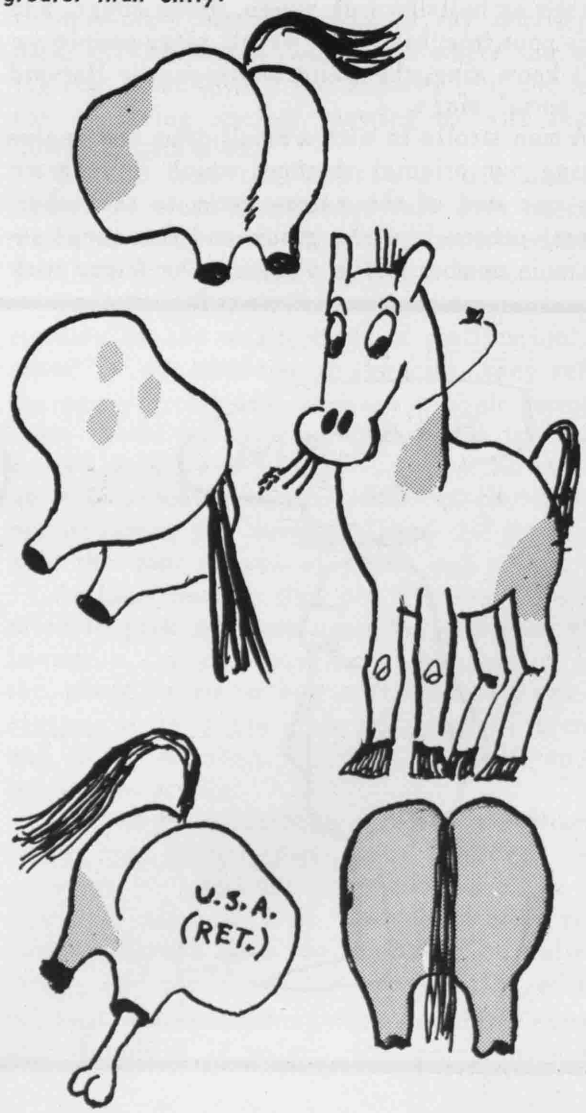
Experience is directly proportional to equipment ruined. Equipment will be damaged in direct proportion to its value!

The sixth law is probably the most disputed and will probably remain so for some time. The controversy is not over its obvious truth but whether Finagle first deduced it by observing Murphy or vice-versa.

If something is foolproof, a more perfect fool will come to be.

Or stated in more exact terms:

The ratio of horses' buttocks to horses is much greater than unity!



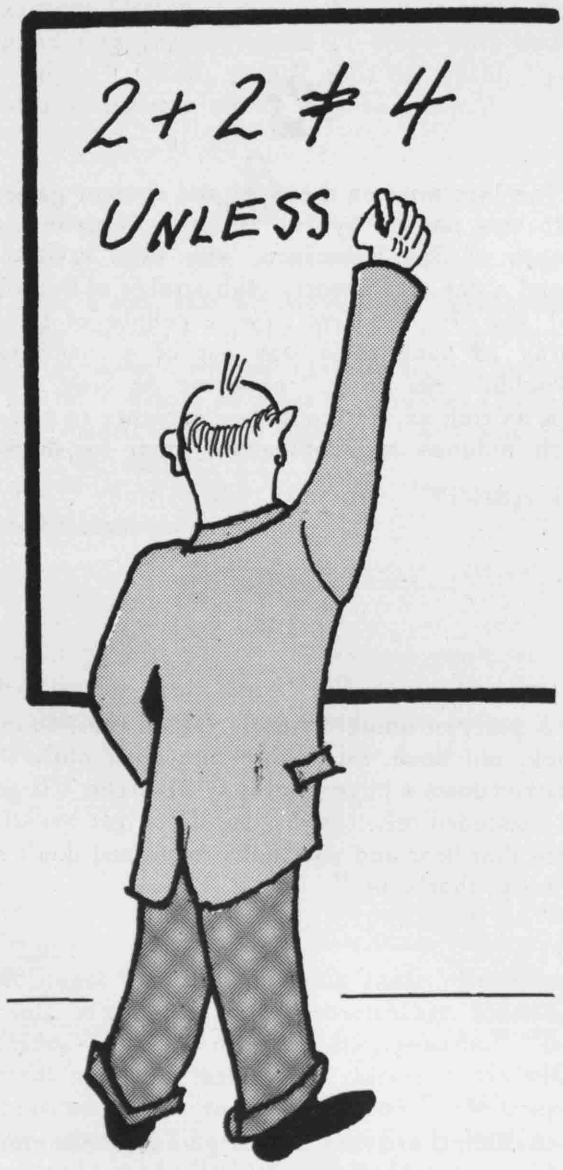
Throughout their experiments, the devoted scientists carefully followed the basic philosophy of all experimentation as stated by Murphy:

"Science is truth. Don't be misled by facts."

Because careful and exact procedure for correcting data have never been effectively studied, Murphy and Finagle were forced to pioneer this fruitful field of research. The most important results, as every Techman has grown to know, are the so called data correction factors.

The lowliest ot these factors is the Bugger factor, used only by inexperienced experimenters on the night before the lab report is due.
It is defined as:

Experimental Value ± B_f = Theoretical Value



TDF.

It is usually inserted discreetly at the end of the report, just before experimental error is calculated, and no explanation is offered for its insertion. This is also sometimes incorrectly called the fudge factor, which is entirely different. The fudge factor is entirely a physical factor, such as stopping the stop-watch a little bit early to compensate for error. The Diddle method is of a slightly higher order than the fudge factor and is consequently harder to detect. If in transferring data from one equation to another, you "accidently" misplace a decimal point or slightly rearrange the order of the digits, you have applied a Diddle transformation.

These methods, as tested by Murphy and Finagle, proved to be childish in nature and hardly effective. It was left for the two discoverers to invent and quantitativly describe a positive method for data correction. The Finagle Factor, as presented in the Journal of Experimental Technicians is:

Your data x F_f = Theoretical data

In other words, each data point is analyzed and is then corrected by a separate and distinct Finagle Factor F_f. Judicious use of this method, and/or use of the ninth law:

First draw your curves, then plot the points!

This will result in a theory-proving paper every time. However, the height of experimental correction is the Murphy variable constant, or constant variable, depending on which way infinity is approaching you. The Murphy variable constant is applied directly to the theoretical equation you are trying to prove. It is usually in the form of a correction factor, e.g. for friction of table tilt, etc., and therefore must be at least partially justified. Probably, the most famous Murphy constant variable was $\sqrt{1 - c^2/v^2}$ which was indiscriminately applied to mass, time, and length in its various forms in a senior thesis by A. Einstein. Even at this late,date, the fraud has not been uncovered by reputable scientists.

Finally, we have the tenth and most important law in the Murphy Finagle system. It is sometimes known as the "way out" law and leads the way to the eleventh law of inevitable correction.

Whenever a system becomes completely defined, some damn fool discovers something which either abolishes the system or expands it beyond recognition.

HUZZANGA

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