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Dear Abbe

Dear Abbe,

At our last microscopy society council meeting, the Mac users were having trouble finding the appropriate adaptors or “dongles.” This ended up as a comparison of their “thingies” (as they put it) to see which would work and then a comparison of the ages of their “thingies.” I find this trend to compare and discuss “thingies” out in the open to be disturbing. Is there any way to curb this behavior?
PC from Peoria

Dear Politically Confused,

Ach mein Wort! It is not surprising that when you get a quorum of microscopy council members, there will be a competition (of sorts) to see who has the latest, best, or biggest ancillary equipment. What is disturbing is that they have so many “thingies” to choose from. In my day, there were only writing utensils and assistants who used those writing utensils. Of course, we had to search for them as well, but it was much more satisfying to be seeking a wayward Flittchen mit Bleistift than an inanimate and vague “thingy.” My advice is to allow them their moments of exploration—after all they need all the excitement they can create to alleviate the ennui of an extended council meeting! Who knows what kind of dongles and thingies might emerge to liven up the proceedings!

Dear Abbe,

We are trying to renovate several rooms to house our new microscopes. The architects are concerned because these rooms are situated between some machine rooms and the electrical breaker room. They claim that the microscopes will be influenced by the magnetic fields. Do you think this is possible?
Skeptical in Sedona

Dear Skep,

After consulting with Madam Dikroic, we came to the conclusion that, indeed, certain microscopes can be influenced negatively and positively by magnetic fields. Other than attracting unwanted attention from Verrücktes, I myself have benefitted from wearing magnetic wrist adornments. They increased my appetite for arroz y frijoles while markedly decreasing my incidence of flatulence. This effect may not be experienced by all. Putting a magnetic bracelet just above the objective turret, for example, did not decrease the incidence of nail polish on the objectives, nor the flatulence levels of the technician that frequently uses it. Electron microscopes appear to be almost worthless when magnetic adornments are added, although some very interesting data can be created. Our TEM service engineer always gets highly animated when he sees the bracelet around the compu-stage, so there is an entertainment factor to consider. With the rooms surrounded by magnetic fields, who knows what interesting and compromising situations will arise—might be fun!

If you have a penetrating question about the way the world works, send it to Herr Abbe. He can be reached through his exceptionally diligent assistant by sending email to jpsshield@uga.edu.

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