

FROM WHERE I SIT

JOHN COONEY

Magnificent Me!

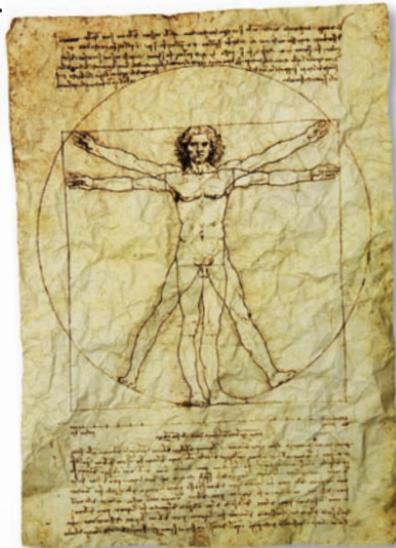
I've got nice legs. My wife tells me that. Okay, they've never stopped traffic or won any prizes. But, as legs go, they aint half bad. In fact, my entire body (allowing for a bit of well-earned sag and droop) is really quite magnificent. There's more to me than meets the eye ...

As I sit at my desk, hunched over a keyboard, some 70 separate muscles make my hands move. And my fingers are so super-sensitive that, with my eyes closed, I can tell if I'm touching paper or plastic or metal or wood just by tapping a fingernail.

My eyes, scanning this sentence faster than I can write, are each fitted with 107 million photocells – all waiting to fire light-and-colour messages to my brain. And, don't ask me how, but those tiny nerve impulses will be turned into 3-D video images that can even be filed away in my head someplace for future reference.

This amazing body is covered in a top-to-toe pantyhose called 'skin.' It's rolled out thin like pastry – smooth in places, wrinkled in others, hairy here-and-there – and it constantly itches, tingles, pleasures and pains me. It's studded with half-a-million transmitters that hum with information on the world out there. And I show my appreciation by faithfully washing and drying it, shaving and pampering it.

They tell me I lose ten-thousand-million dry skin cells each day – to make



room for fresh moist ones underneath. And they tell me that most household dust is actually dead skin – friendly cast-offs from me and my family!

But wait! There's more ...

My skin defends me against vast armies of yeasies and beasties that thrive on my *outsides* – while on my *insides* a guerrilla war is being waged. Fifty million white cells prowl the

I DON'T REPEAT GOSSIP, SO LISTEN CAREFULLY THE FIRST TIME.

length of my bloodstream, searching for baddies – thousands of whom may lurk on the rim of my coffee cup, and a billion or more in a teaspoon of saliva. But against my bodyguards, those baddies don't stand a chance!

If you don't believe I'm magnificent, just watch my body in action when my grandkids throw a frisbee on the beach. My brain does some split-second maths ... my lungs suck oxygen from the air ... my heart bathes every cell with blood ... and, without even thinking about it, I'm on my way to pluck that piece of plastic out of the sky!

Similar small miracles occur a thousand times each day – when I clean my teeth, climb up stairs, walk the dog, or drive my car.

And how about this ...

My body is strapped to 206 chunks of calcium – which compress like springs when I jog (which I don't!) ... and stretch like elastic when I lift something heavy (which I avoid). Twenty-six smaller bones line up in each foot – and, once I eventually kick the bucket, those feet will have carried me some 100,000 kms.

That's more than two-and-a-half times around the world – phew!

When darkness falls and I drift off to sleep, my body still crackles with life. Ninety chest muscles keep me breathing ... my stomach, kidneys, liver and heart work nightshift without being asked ... and 100 million brain-cells compare notes, process data, store memories and programme me for the new day that lies ahead.

Believe it or not, all this magnificence was gifted to me by my parents in that first microscopic cell! And, for six decades since – without switches, levers, gauges or batteries – it has worked like a dream (most of the time).

Makes me feel glad to be alive, I reckon! Glad to be me! And so it should. I mean, if the Creator was willing to invest his best ideas in us humans ... the least we can do is be grateful. ❁

JOHN (GRAPEVINE'S EDITOR FOR ALMOST 30 YEARS) HAS IT ON GOOD AUTHORITY THAT HIS BODY, IF LOOKED AFTER, SHOULD LAST A LIFETIME.

THORT



***I wish I had a dollar
for every time I spent
a dollar, because then
– yahoo! – I'd have all
my money back.
(Jack Handey)***