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## Futility Closet

## Euler's Identity

Posted in Science \& Math by Greg Ross on July 15th, 2007
You know these numbers:

$$
\begin{aligned}
e & =2.71828 \ldots \\
i & =\sqrt{-1} \\
\pi & =3.14159 \ldots
\end{aligned}
$$

On the surface they appear unrelated. $e$ is the base of natural logarithms, $i$ is imaginary, $\pi$ concerns circles. But, amazingly:

$$
e^{i \pi}=-1
$$

Harvard mathematician Benjamin Peirce told a class, "It is absolutely paradoxical; we cannot understand it, and we don't know what it means, but we have proved it, and therefore we know it must be the truth."

## An idler's miscellany

of compendious amusements

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