

Smart Stuff

with Twig Walkingstick



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OHIO AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH
AND DEVELOPMENT CENTER

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Notes: Reindeer and caribou are in fact the same species, *Rangifer tarandus*. (Human grandmas? *Homo sapiens*.) Reindeer are domesticated caribou, herded by people, including, apparently, ones in red suits. (See "Smart Stuff," Dec. 21, 2003, <http://www.ag.osu.edu/~news/story.php?id=2766>.) Sources included *Canadian Geographic* magazine's "Caribou in Canada" Web site (oo, well done), http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/magazine/nd07/indepth/caribou_commonalities.asp, and the BBC Sport Academy (oo, ditto), http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/sa/athletics/features/newsid_2116000/2116146.stm.

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Q. Dear Twig: There's that song, "Grandma Got Run Over By a Reindeer." How fast would the grandma have to run to not get run over by the reindeer?

A.: If the grandma is running straight away from the reindeer, as if racing it or being chased by it, the answer is: she just can't do it. **The grandma can't run fast enough to not get run over by the reindeer.** Aiee! So tell your own grandma if she happens to be in the path of a reindeer to not run away. Just sidestep out of the way. ¡Olé! Like a **matador**.

Scientists put a reindeer's top speed (on the ground, not in the air) at about **32 miles per hour**.

Some say it's even faster, like 50 miles per hour.

The world's fastest human, meanwhile, tops out at **27 miles per hour** in a very short

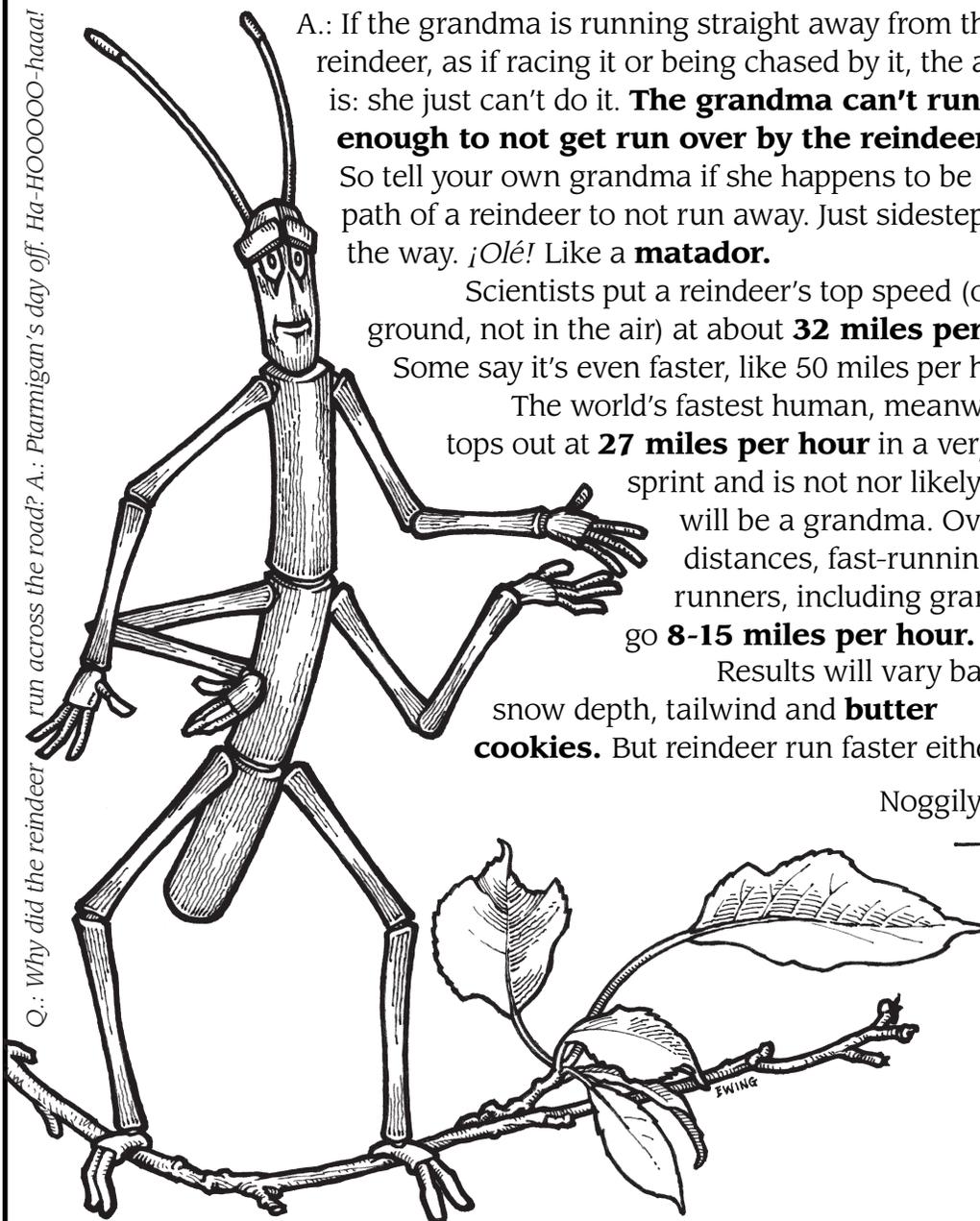
sprint and is not nor likely ever will be a grandma. Over long distances, fast-running runners, including grandmas, go **8-15 miles per hour**.

Results will vary based on snow depth, tailwind and **butter cookies**. But reindeer run faster either way.

Noggily,

Twig

Q.: Why did the reindeer run across the road? A.: Ptarmigan's day off. Ha-HOOOOO-haa!



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