

# The Braincage



At first Annette struggled not to laugh when Bob carefully strapped his invention to her head. The McGillicuddy Brain Wave Optimizer simply looked so silly! Like he'd taken an old birdcage, added a toaster heating element to it, then spray painted it fuchsia. However, when he flipped the switch to "on" and she instantly remembered the square root of 199 plus what she'd stuffed under the parlor sofa cushion last year so Brad wouldn't find it, she began to have second thoughts. She closed her eyes and her mind suddenly registered an image from what could only be her prenatal days. Her inchoate eyes peered into what looked like the interior of a water balloon filled with bright blue porridge. Photoautotrophic bloodsnails clung to a Fallopian tube – one of three, she was surprised to see – as her embryonic tentacles attached to and suckled on an ovarian spigot. It was a sight that Dr. Frank Baxter could've only dreamt about! She opened her eyes, and there was Bob right in front of her, grinning like a Cheshire caterpillar. "Any luck?" he asked. She nodded, but the motion produced a series of probabilistic algorithms that overrode her vocal response mechanism. She motioned for him to remove the Optimizer. He unhooked the clips and pulled gently, but it didn't budge. He tugged harder – still nothing, though Annette did momentarily envision a new corollary to Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle. Frustrated, Bob climbed onto Annette's shoulders, grabbed the braincage with both hands, and yanked as hard as he could. With a loud *pop!*, it broke free. Unfortunately, the device contained more than negligible bits of Annette. Hmm. Perhaps some minor design retooling was necessary before it was ready to demonstrate at next week's Neurosciencepalooza!