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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Re: Drake's Equation

From: **Greg Sandow** <[GSANDOW@prodigy.net](mailto:GSANDOW@prodigy.net)>  
Date: Sun, 05 Jan 1997 10:39:26 -0500  
Fwd Date: Mon, 06 Jan 1997 05:55:13 -0500  
Subject: Re: Drake's Equation

Steve Bassett writes:

> *The Drake equation, of course, was never about proof. Rather it used a  
> common approach to test an hypothesis by identifying as many variables as  
> possible, apply estimated quantities to see if the result made any sense,  
> and thus create a quantitative basis for debate and analysis.*

...snip....

> *What should have happened is that the fundamental hypothesis behind the  
> equation would be continually revisited and the equation structure updated  
> and refined. - same for the numbers to be inserted.*

> *The real value of the Drake equation was its role as a bridge between the  
> worlds of ET Phenomena research and mainstream astronomy/astrophysics. A  
> more rigorous and narrowly calculated Drake equation would serve the same  
> purpose in the mainstream world as higher quality photographic evidence and  
> first person accounts serve in the UFOlogical world - refining the hypothesis  
> to improve the focus and quality of the debate and steer the research along  
> the most fruitful paths.*

Good thoughts. I'd love to know what Drake thinks of his equation these days. His thoughts must have evolved.

I look at his effort two ways. From one view, it's something to giggle at, especially when you read his book, and sense how proud he was of his conclusion, that there are between 1000 and 100 million intelligent civilizations in the galaxy.

From another view, Drake was a pioneer, simply because he used the best tools science has to discuss and attempt to quantify something science doesn't like to deal with. Eventually, I can see Drake discussed, just as Steve suggests, in the same breath as ufologists -- although he himself, I'm sure, would be horrified at the thought!

Greg Sandow

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