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## UFO UpDates Mailing List

### Faster Than Light...

From: **Peregrine Mendoza** <101653.2205@CompuServe.COM>  
Date: 17 Mar 97 22:18:35 EST  
Fwd Date: Tue, 18 Mar 1997 09:11:00 -0500  
Subject: Faster Than Light...

The Duke of M. hopes you enjoy the following:

----- Forwarded Message -----

Excerpt from

=====  
The mini-Annals of Improbable Research ("mini-AIR")  
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A free newsletter of tidbits too tiny to fit in  
The Annals of Improbable Research (AIR),  
the journal of inflated research and personalities  
=====

1997-03-11      Scientific Correctness: Zippy Travel

Here is the report on our SCIENTIFIC CORRECTNESS SURVEY #2. The question was:

Is faster-than-light travel possible?

This survey drew an onslaught of opinions.

The vote was a landslide (72%) for the YES side. Thus, another controversy is put to rest. Henceforth, it will be scientifically correct to believe that faster-than-light travel is possible.

Opinions ranged from positive to negative, and from simple ("Yes") to hideously complex. While the results are interesting, the variety of methods used to obtain them is dazzling.

Some readers used fuzzy logic:  
I have never really believed that light actually goes at the speed of light. Have we any proof? I worked out that it should go at root two times the speed of light (c) making the constant itself irrelevant.

--Graeme Winter

Other readers used higher-level fuzzy logic:  
This is an interesting question, coincidentally I was driving through a Minnesota blizzard last week when my wife told me to slow down because I was 'over driving my headlights.' I was so excited I almost spilled my coffee because I thought that she meant I was traveling faster than the speed of light, but then I realized that she meant that because of the poor conditions, the stopping distance for my car was greater than my visibility.

--Don Berryman

\* \* \*  
One reader used tangential logic:  
Since light has yet to dawn on school boards here in Texas, we are  
unable to answer this question.

--Julia Frugoli

\* \* \*  
Some took a theoretical bent:

Yes, but no matter what the destination, you always arrive at  
night.

--Dick Baker

My fraternity brother Charles Jones (MIT '63) created a faster-  
than-light vehicle in 1960. A beam of light is reflected in a  
mirror. Approaching the mirror, the light's velocity is (+)c.  
After reflection it is -c. Ergo at the instant of reflection, its  
velocity is 0. When the vehicle passes the mirror, it goes faster  
than light.

--A. D. Snider

\* \* \*  
Others relied on advanced theories:

Faster than light travel IS possible but only if you are facing  
backwards.

--Charles Belair

It depends on how fast the light is going.

--Michael Castleman

\* \* \*  
Some readers cited empirical evidence:

Of course. It is demonstrated every week in "Star Trek: The Next  
Generation". They also demonstrate crystal power, telepathy,  
reversal of the polarity of neutron fluxes in starboard power  
couplings, and other facets of modern science.

--Stephen Trier

No. No no no no no no. Most people think Star Trek has solved the  
problem of faster-than-light travel. I am much more fascinated by  
Star Trek's solution to the sound-in-a-vacuum problem.

--Karen Lingel

"Yes!" E-mail uses delivery through electrical circuits, therefore  
traveling at the speed of light (one of the reasons for its  
popularity over the historically traditional US Postal "Service").  
America OnLine uses these same electrical circuits. It is well  
known that almost anything travels faster than AOL these days.

--G. Borochoff

\* \* \*  
Not everyone relied on intellectual arguments. Two readers,  
Charlie Cerf and Peter Thorp, sent in variants of the same  
classical argument:

There was a young lady called Bright  
who could travel much faster than light.  
She departed one day  
in a relative way  
and returned on the previous night

\* \* \*  
Practical experience, too, was useful in solving the question:

Of course faster-than-light travel is possible. However, the  
probability that your luggage will wind up at the wrong  
destination increases as the cube of the velocity.

--Bob O'Hara

Yes. Faster than light travel is possible and can be readily  
demonstrated by making the mistake of having two dates show up at  
your place at the same time. I've done this and witnessed first  
hand the flight, which happens so fast that you can't see it.

--P. Hughes

Yes, but tickets must be purchased at least three weeks in advance  
and a Saturday night stay is required.

--Kristina Pawlikowski

After my cat decided it was play time at 3 AM, he was forcefully  
accelerated from the bed. Quickly, his velocity reached the of  
light resulting in a mid-air white hot flash of spontaneous  
combustion (matter to energy.) Conversely, all internal energies  
(neuroelectrical, biochemical, etc.) were converted to matter. A  
strange ash covered the room, very similar to scoopable litter.

The other possibility is that he landed on my camera equipment and has been hiding ever since.

--Don Copeland

\* \* \*

Finally, one response defied categorization:

Of course, as a physics teacher I tell my students that faster-than-light travel is impossible, but that's just to crush their spirits.

--LaNelle Ohlhausen

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