

Professor Jerry lines 'em up

The Urth list — 4 messages, 2 voices, 03 Dec 2002

<https://urth.darkrealm.vip/thread/urth/3641>

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Michael Andre-Driussi — 03 Dec 2002, 00:34

Jerry Friedman wrote:

Thanks, Blattid. I probably shouldn't mention that I have a Ph. D. in physics, since then people might stop arguing with me about physics, and as my students could tell you, I do make mistakes.

Well call me bushwacked.

<Curious to see what Professor Jerry will say about using t and t(o).>

=mantis=

Jerry Friedman — 03 Dec 2002, 23:26 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

--- Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com> wrote:

Jerry Friedman wrote:

Thanks, Blattid. I probably shouldn't mention that I have a Ph. D. in physics, since then people might stop arguing with me about physics, and as my students could tell you, I do make mistakes.

Well call me bushwacked.

I apologize. When I thought about it, I thought that my reasons for not mentioning my Ph. D. were better than my reasons for revealing it, so I probably should have stayed "in the closet".

<Curious to see what Professor Jerry will say about using t and t(o).>

That works, but I still like my suggestion of "Urth time" and "Whorl time". To me, that's precisely what you're talking about--how long it's been according to timekeeping on Urth and on the _Whorl_.

By the way, we covered S. R. in my Conceptual Physics class today, and I used rough approximations to your numbers as an example, with a plug for TBotLS. Thanks!

[After they allowed me to escape with a Ph. D., my only association with physics has been teaching it at community colleges, so I'm not a professor--or a real physicist, as Dan'I called me.]

Jerry Friedman

Michael Andre-Driussi — 04 Dec 2002, 17:08 · follows Jerry Friedman

Professor Jerry wrote:

When I thought about it, I thought that my reasons for not mentioning my Ph. D. were better than my reasons for revealing it, so I probably should have stayed "in the closet".

I strongly disagree: not mentioning it upfront was what made it a back-alley ambush of a housewife by an academician. In the animal kingdom this is predatory camouflage.

I think it is clear that I was addressing a person who seemed to be exhibiting Newtonian thought. Without the "Ph.D. in Physics" context, the tagging of "Urth time" and "Whorl time" looked non-Einsteinian, and rather Newtonian: the poster's unwritten, perhaps even unexamined assumption (like blattid's non-Einsteinian initial and secondary estimates of the distance between Urth and Breen systems) might well be something as simple and clean as "Whorl years are 3 Urth years long," since after all, this will establish how 333 years can equal 1000 years. The point of my response was to gesture at the wonder of time dilation as an Einsteinian reality (the counterintuitive gulf between the universes of Newton and Einstein) and to state the fact that I did not coin the terms.

Professor Jerry wrote:

By the way, we covered S. R. in my Conceptual Physics class today, and I used rough approximations to your numbers as an example, with a plug for TBotLS. Thanks!

You are not welcome. I will strive to avoid similar alleys and people in the future. And you should do your own calculations to avoid the taint of pseudoscience and other academician nasties.

=mantis=

Jerry Friedman — 04 Dec 2002, 20:44 · follows Michael Andre-Driussi

--- Michael Andre-Driussi <mantis at siriusfiction.com> wrote:

Professor Jerry wrote:

When I thought about it, I thought that my reasons for not mentioning my Ph. D. were better than my reasons for revealing it, so I probably should have stayed "in the closet".

I strongly disagree: not mentioning it upfront was what made it a back-alley ambush of a housewife by an academician. In the animal kingdom this is predatory camouflage.

Clearly you're more upset about this than I gathered from your previous post. I'm sorry. I had no intention of hurting anyone, certainly not you, someone whose posts I'm often grateful for, and I feel bad that that was the result of what I did.

However, I'm not entirely clear on why you feel so strongly about this. Is it because if you'd known I'd studied physics, you wouldn't have assumed I was responding to you from a Newtonian point of view? I'd appreciate clarification if you're interested in providing it. In any case, from my point of view there was nothing predatory about it. I wasn't thinking, "Aha, I've trapped Mantis into making a statement that I can correct!"--or enjoying the "ambush" in any other way.

Finally, I don't know whether this is important to you, but I won't do this again in my other mailing-list and Usenet discussions.

I think it is clear that I was addressing a person who seemed to be exhibiting Newtonian thought. Without the "Ph.D. in Physics" context, the tagging of "Urth time" and "Whorl time" looked non-Einsteinian, and rather Newtonian: the poster's unwritten, perhaps even unexamined assumption (like

blattid's non-Einsteinian initial and secondary estimates of the distance between Urth and Breen systems) might well be something as simple and clean as "Whorl years are 3 Urth years long," since after all, this will establish how 333 years can equal 1000 years.

I'm afraid I didn't even think, "What mistake does he believe I'm making?" I can see, though, that if you did want to use "Urth time" and "Whorl time" in that table, you might need to explain those terms so people wouldn't make that mistake.

The point of my response was to gesture at the wonder of time dilation as an Einsteinian reality (the counterintuitive gulf between the universes of Newton and Einstein) and to state the fact that I did not coin the terms.

Indeed, I've seen "subjective" and "objective time" before in sf, and if you were to tell me they've been used in popularizations as well, I wouldn't be surprised.

Professor Jerry wrote:

By the way, we covered S. R. in my Conceptual Physics class today, and I used rough approximations to your numbers as an example, with a plug for TBotLS. Thanks!

You are not welcome. I will strive to avoid similar alleys and people in the future. And you should do your own calculations to avoid the taint of pseudoscience and other academician nasties.

If that's how you want it, I won't use your numbers any more.

Jerry Friedman