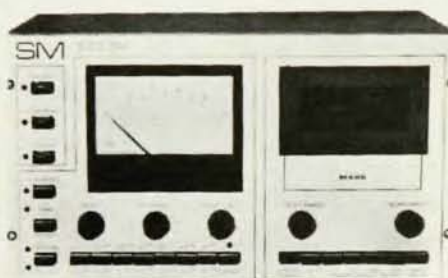


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letters

"as appropriate today as they were when they were written." At least the falling dancer could have been male.

VERA C. RUBIN

Carnegie Institution of Washington
Washington, D. C.

1/82

How to spot a physicist

Your readers may be interested to hear that a simple way has been suggested for instantly recognizing and identifying physicists. This intriguing information came to me as a result of my inquiry into the identification crisis that exists in the library profession.

From what I have learned, the physics community doesn't seem to suffer from such a crisis, for physicists are easily identified (particularly at festive occasions) by merely noting what footwear they wear and what they drink. A passion for wearing Hush Puppies and an undeniable and demonstrable fondness for beer appear to be the unique combination that sets them apart. The source of information is reputable, for the person who did the research has been an avid and avowed longtime physicist-watcher. As a non-physicist, I am totally unequipped and unqualified to evaluate the validity of this revelation, but after some thought it seemed quite plausible and to make good sense. Hush Puppies would of course come in handy when sneaking up on leptons, hadrons and those other minuscule particles physicists are forever chasing, and the beer (if consumed in carefully administered amounts) would surely help when conjuring up those theories and hypotheses the rest of us admire but don't understand.

I share this information with the physics community and other physicist-watchers in the hope that further research may ascertain the validity of this fascinating hypothesis.

ALFRED J. HODINA

Sciences-Engineering Library
University of California
Santa Barbara, California

9/81

Israeli nuclear warheads

In your lengthy news item "Iraqi reactor damaged in Israeli bombing raid" (August, page 53), you apparently did not see fit to even mention that Israel has consistently refused to sign the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and, by all reliable accounts (including the CIA), has already developed tens of nuclear warheads. Also, Israel has refused to allow the International Atomic Energy Agency to inspect its nuclear facilities.