

I think he should at least attribute the list to the physicists who compiled it rather than to the *New York Times*.

The Strings 2000 conference was hosted by the University of Michigan in July of that year. The organizing committee, which I chaired, invited each participant to supply a question; the best 10 questions were chosen by a panel consisting of David Gross, Edward Witten, and me. More details, including names of the people responsible for the winning questions, may be found on the Web at <http://feynman.physics.lsa.umich.edu/strings2000/millennium.html>.

Incidentally, the list produced an unexpected reaction in the strife-torn city of Belfast, Northern Ireland. A local artist concluded that, instead of fighting each other, its citizens might better spend their time pondering deep thoughts. He posted plaques of the top 10 questions around the city at bus stops, in pubs, and elsewhere, much to the bemusement of the residents. See <http://www.qub.ac.uk/mp/questions/index.html>.

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MERMIN REPLIES: I cited the *New York Times* because it set me thinking about such lists by characterizing the questions as ones physicists (not just string theorists) would most like to know the answers to. When I submitted the column to PHYSICS TODAY, they told me about the Web site. Visiting it, I learned that the *Times*, surprisingly, had got the 10 questions exactly right. Since I had made it clear that the questions originated with string theorists, I saw no reason to cite the Web site too. But visiting it again, I now note the heading "Physics Problems for the Next Millennium." So I was wrong to attribute this overstatement to the *Times*.

I also visited the Queen's University Web site recommended by Michael Duff and was pleased and surprised to find my own 10 questions listed alongside those of the string theorists. I have not noticed either set posted on the Lexington Avenue Subway, but I have not been down to the city in many months.

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Goldhaber Provided Szilard's Isotopes

Allen D. Allen's letter about Leo Szilard's radiation treatment (PHYSICS TODAY, February 2001, page 82) prompts me to offer some more information on the story Allen had heard.

It was not Jonas Salk but Maurice Goldhaber, then director of Brookhaven National Laboratory, who provided Szilard with isotopes for irradiation of his bladder cancer in 1960 (see page 25 in this issue for more on Goldhaber). Salk and Szilard were conspiring at the time, but not about medical isotopes; their collaboration led to the founding, two years later, of the Salk Institute for Biological Studies, where Szilard was one of the first fellows.

I discovered this while researching *Genius in the Shadows: A Biography of Leo Szilard, The Man Behind the Bomb* (U. of Chicago Press, 1994), which I wrote with help from Szilard's brother, Bela Silard. For details about the treatment, see especially chapter 26.

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