

SUBMISSION

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TO: Robert Benchley Society Benchley Write-alike Contest.

Special Relativity – in a nutshell where it belongs

This year we shall be celebrating the 100th anniversary of Einstein's special theory of relativity, and I for one believe the man may have something here I believe I shall have take a moment to explain relativity to one and all. Relativity explains what happens when you are traveling at the speed of light (C), which is the fastest you can possibly travel before you get a nosebleed (NB) - and you are seen by a witness standing on a subway platform (who thinks he has had some form of Grand Mal seizure, but he hasn't, because I just made him up). According to Einstein, you will age more slowly on your lightbeam, although your clothes will be a mess and you'll never see your bowler again. The witness, on the other hand, will begin having heart trouble, and eventually be taken out of the subway by paramedics.

Here's why, according to my expert on Einstein (who met him once in a subway). The witness on the subway platform thinks he sees you traveling at the same speed as the motorcycle. Er... did I mention the motorcycle? Sorry. The motorcycle is also traveling at the speed of light right alongside you. (I haven't a clue who let the motorcycle into the subway, but with everybody flying around so fast, nobody had time to think about anything but chasing down their bowlers.) At any rate, the witness tries to hitch a ride on the motorcycle. But by the time he sticks out his thumb, the motorcycle is 67,000 miles away (or 94,000 miles away, if he took the freeway).

But, if the witness and the subway platform were also traveling at the speed of light, the motorcycle would look like it's standing still, and the witness could theoretically hop on the back seat and get home day before yesterday. The paramedics would never be called and can pick up that drunk at City Hall instead, unless of course the drunk is also traveling at the speed of light, which is unlikely, since he can't even afford a subway token.

So the question for today's test is, should Einstein be cited for theoretical reckless driving, and his insurance rates increased?