

Letters

Wrong Division

Philadelphia

Would you please ask Professor Feynman what kind of computer he used to divide 1 by 273 to get .004115226337? It doesn't appear that the 273 is a misprint, as it occurs again on the next page (page 18 of the January-February issue of *E&S*).

Digitally yours,

JERRY DONOHUE, PhD '47

Despite the fact that we got at least a dozen letters just like Mr. Donohue's, we did not ask Professor Feynman where he got the figure 273, because we made the mistake when we were transcribing his talk. As to what the figure should have been—the best possible explanation came from Eric Kehle, whose letter is reproduced in full at the right.

Great Men

Pasadena

Professor Feynman's "Los Alamos From Below" was a glorious and truly awe-inspiring account....But he is entirely too modest. Anyone smart enough to give the geniuses at Los Alamos the impression that he was a genius would have to be a genius to pull it off....

It is often forgotten that what makes the Great Men of Science the Great Men of Science in the first place is not so much a matter of having the right answers but of asking the right questions. You may not get the right answer, but you can't get any answer until you do ask—a point that is frequently forgotten by many young people. Feynman's reminiscences should be required reading for undergrads majoring in science.

It is too frequently forgotten that true genius is not a matter of IQ, but of personality and temperament as



Editor,

Sir I was reading ~~your~~ ^{the} article "Los Alamos from Below" by Richard P. ~~Andrews Feynman Feynman~~. Mr. Feynman said that if you ~~divide~~ divide 1 by 273 you will get the fraction .004115226337... which is incorrect. 1 divided by 273 equals .003663003 (that is how many places our calculator carries out) The proper number that you divide one by to get the fraction .004115226337... is 243. That is $1 \div 243 = .004115226337...$

Over all I really liked the article.

Yours Truly,

Eric Kehle

Apr 13

well.... While Feynman professes to be mystified by Bethe and Bohr's lighting up like Christmas trees at his iconoclastic style, it must be borne in mind that that is exactly what the spirit of scientific inquiry is all about—the willingness to take nothing for granted and to challenge anything and everything....

The key to Feynman's greatness is precisely that he realized from the very beginning, down there at the bottom of the totem pole, that science by its very nature is not an answer but a question, and that the scientist is not a person who has all the answers but one who is smart enough (and sometimes gutsy enough) to ask....

How did Feynman get to be Feynman? Simple. Feynman was Feynman, right from the start.

JAMES J. GLACKIN

Dear HmMMMM

Garden City, Michigan

DEAR PERSON:

Would you please inform me of how I may acquire a copy of your June 1974 issue including R. P. Feynman's "Cargo Cult Science"?

Thank you,

TIMOTHY NORRIS

P.S. What is the proper salutation in this modern age?

We've sent Mr. Norris the copy of E & S he asked for—but we can't seem to come up with a satisfactory answer to the question in his P.S.

Any suggestions?