

Explaining the universe

by Steve Tonner

"At low energies the effective coupling constant becomes very large and perturbation theory breaks down. It is hoped that this 'infrared slavery' will explain why quarks are always confined in colourless bound states, but so far no one has been able to demonstrate this really convincingly." Huh?

This passage, from Stephen Hawking's new book, *Black Holes and Baby Universes*, might seem a little confusing at first, taken as it is out of context and without any setup. So, think it gets any better with time? Guess again. Although this second book is still filled with Hawking's singular sense of wit and humour, there are still parts which are beyond the layperson.

Not that this makes it a bad read, because there are many other chapters that are much more readable. Some of these are the first three, which are about Hawking's early life and the reasons he chose the career he did, as well as an interview at the end of the book.

After the autobiographical begin-



The main focus of the remainder of the book, as in his first, *A Brief History of Time*, is Hawking's attempt to help non-specialist readers to better understand the universe around them. Many of the articles are indeed interesting, punctuated by Hawking's engaging style. At times, he even makes the reader laugh with an offhanded observation about one cosmological phenomenon or another. Who would have thought that such a topic could be potentially funny?

One big difference between *Black Holes and Baby Universes* and Hawking's first book is that while the first book was written entirely as a whole unit, the second is instead made up of collected articles, talks, and lectures. This makes the book almost seem like "Hawking's greatest hits" rather than a second attempt to explain the mysteries of the universe to us. Nevertheless, Hawking still succeeds in creating a book which is interesting to the amateur cosmologist, and actually manages to keep us interested and even amused.

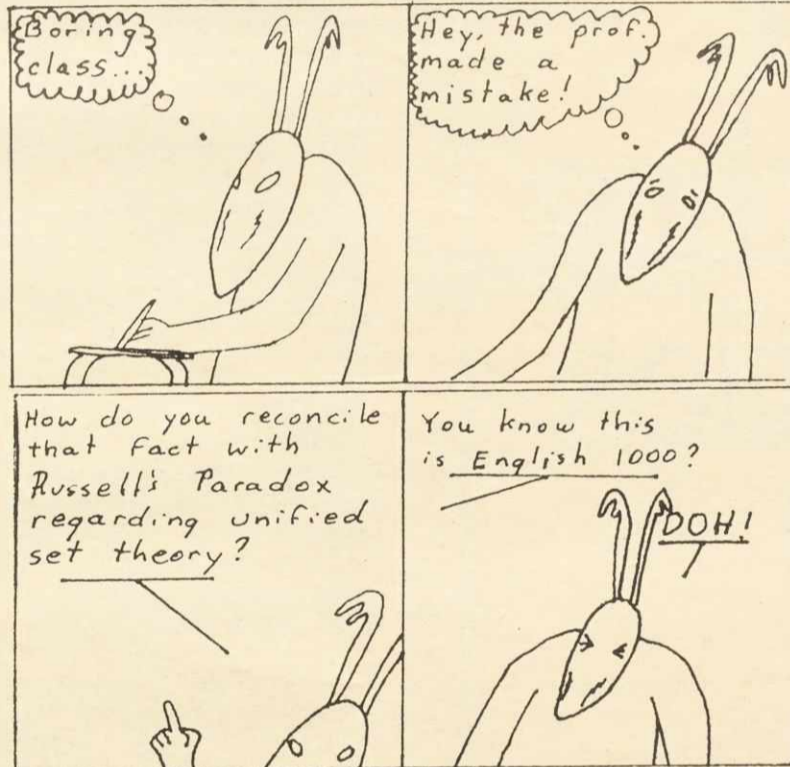
ning, the book goes on in the form of several previously published articles, talks and lectures. It is interesting to note, however, that two of the aforementioned first three chapters are also previously written talks that were delivered by Hawking.

POINTLESS PONDERABLES

QUESTION #1: Let's make a deal. You're on Monty Hall's famous game show "LET'S MAKE A DEAL", you've gotten lucky with your giant banana costume and your given the choice of three doors. Behind one is a new car, behind the other two is one of Monty's worthless booby prizes. When given your chance you choose a door, but before it gets revealed, Monty opens one of the other doors for you (revealing a booby prize) and gives you the option of changing your mind and choosing the remaining unopened door. Should you switch doors or does it matter?

NOTE: The following assumptions can be made: 1. The game is fair (they won't move the car on you). 2. Monty gives everybody this same choice (he's not just trying to bait you away from the car). 3. Monty knows where the car is and isn't going to reveal it when he opens a door and allows you to switch.

Answers revealed next week.



opinions

Leftovers

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women's rights. We must let anti-choice groups know that whenever these rights are threatened, their anti-woman agenda will be opposed in the streets. We must send the message — not only to them, but more importantly to the supporters of choice who hesitate to speak out — that a majority of Canadians support a woman's right to choose and that we will resist any attempts to roll back our hard-won gains.

We are living in a time of severe cutbacks — ordinary working people and students are being asked to pay for an economic crisis we did not create. People are being laid off, wages are frozen or rolled back and social services are being slashed. Social programmes and benefits like maternity leave, subsidized daycare and medicare were won by mass mobilization of working people, the poor and the disadvantaged. Our limited access to abortion was fought for by movements for women's liberation, gay and lesbian rights, and trade unionists.

We must fight to defend and extend these gains, so that we are not driven back into the closet, back into the kitchen and back to the backstreet abortionist.

Please join us on October 3rd, 2:30

pm at the Commons fountain. If possible, bring placards and chants. We need to be noisy and visible! Call Megan at 492-9274 for more information.

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Thur Oct 7 Benefit

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Fri Oct 8

Hardship Post + Thrush Hermit

Sat Oct 9

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Every Tues is open mike night with Bronco

Sloan, jale, & Hardship Post tickets now on sale

ISSJ POSITIONS AVAILABLE

- Female Dalhousie Student - Dalhousie Women's Centre Management Collective Rep
- First Year Dal Student - Member at Large
- N.S. Public Interest Research Group - Dal Rep

Applications for these positions can be picked up in room 222. Completed forms should be returned to Caroline Kolompar c/o of room 222. **Deadline Thursday, September 30th.**

ISSJ VOLUNTEERS NEEDED...

... for various academic, financial, non-academic committees and clown troupe.

Drop by Council Offices (room 222, S.U.B.) or call 494 - 1106!

GET INVOLVED. WE NEED YOU!

ISSJ NEXT DSU COUNCIL MEETING

Sunday, October 3 at 1:00 p.m. in Council Chambers, 2nd Floor, Student Union Building.

EVERYONE WELCOME!