

Dear Editors,

October issue with the Schmidts ["Opportunity Knocks," October 2014]. More, MORE. They are really fun, please encourage more more . . .

Jim Eagle

Dear Friend:

I always find articles like Edward M. Lerner's "Alien AWOLs: The Great Silence" (*Analog*, October 2014) to be fascinating. But I always wonder, what else should we expect?

Are we the only intelligent race in the Universe? We aren't even the only intelligent race on Earth. Dolphins and their relatives and crows and some other birds are just some of Earth's intelligent passengers. True, we humans are the only ones with the language and dexterity to create a technological civilization. But that's something different from "intelligence."

Why haven't we heard from other technological civilizations, or at least eavesdropped on them? SETI programs hope to detect electromagnetic signals. This has always seemed a little foolish to me. These travel only at the speed of light. Although this is pretty fast, the distances between planets in our Solar System makes real-time communication from Earth for control of space probes out at Mars, Jupiter, or Saturn impractical. I can only wonder if the adjective "intelligent" would be appropriate for races (our own included) who think that communication with their neighbors over distances requiring years, perhaps hundreds or thousands of years, for a reply is practical.

Well, if two-way communication is out of the question, how about just sending out a "Here we are!" message? (Considering what has happened every time European "aliens" contacted aboriginal cultures around the world, perhaps this is also not such an intelligent idea.) In the January 2012 issue of *Sky & Telescope* magazine, Joseph Lazio describes a variety of ways to send signals between stars. He also discusses the vast amounts of energy required for any of these methods. Why would any "intelligent" race waste such immense amounts of energy on such a silly, perhaps risky, mission? They probably wouldn't.

Another way to detect alien civilizations would be to listen for their radio and TV broadcasts (eavesdrop). A sidebar to the *Sky & Telescope* article asked the question, "Could aliens listen to

our radio or watch our TV?" But it left out the answer to one important question: "If the alien civilization was technologically similar to ours, how close would they have to be to detect our signals (or, from the point of view of SETI, we, theirs)?" I queried *Sky & Telescope* and my question was answered in their April 2012 issue. According to Dr. Lazio, "we could only detect ourselves slightly outside the Solar System and certainly not farther than about 1,000 a.u. [astronomical units]." For reference, Dr. Lazio pointed out that the Alpha Centauri star system, our closest stellar neighbor, is about 300,000 a.u. away.

Why haven't they visited us? Considering the number of UFO reports that have not been classified as due to swamp gas, the planet Venus, hoaxes, etc., and the reports of strange beings in the various mythologies of terrestrial cultures, perhaps Fermi's question should have been "Why didn't they stick around?" Perhaps they did. But would you want to visit folks whose main method of settling disagreements is to use deadly force?

We should not be surprised if it seems that we are alone.

Jack Ryan

Editors,

In the November issue, the story "Flow" by Arlan Andrews, Sr. generated the thought that this is a continuation of another story I read in *Analog* six months to a year ago. Nowhere is a mention of "Flow" being part 2 of a story or being associated with any other story. Every time a story or the characters in a story are associated with a previous story you put a note about it at the end. Therefore I assume my mind is messing with me. That is why I am contacting you. I see too many similarities between "Flow" and the story I read. In fact, if I had not read this other story, some of "Flow" just would not have worked as well as it does. Is "Flow" a continuation or a part 2 of another story? If so, what is the name of the story and what issue of *Analog* was it in? If I am right, then you might put a note out in a future *Analog* to let others know of the connection.

Randolph J. Shine  
Deerfield Beach, FL

*No, your mind (probably) isn't messing with you. We just done goofed and left off the editor's note letting readers know that "Flow" is a sequel to "Thaw" (July/August 2013). ■*