

Re: In the spirit of Xmas...

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*Source:* <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.physics.research/2007-12/msg00166.html>

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  - *Date:* Sat, 29 Dec 2007 13:23:30 -0500 (EST)
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pellis wrote:

If Moderator allows it for the festive season, you might be amused by this link, from the Boing Boing blog 25/12/07, apparently concerning an ether-drift-detecting machine from 1932 (sic).  
<http://blog.modernmechanix.com/2007/12/24/queer-machine-checks-up-on-ether-drift/>  
Presumably this was a 1932 attempt to undermine relativity theory, for non-scientific reasons...

That is the Michelson interferometer constructed by Joos. It is so unwieldy looking because of the vacuum cans surrounding the light paths. He obtained a value consistent with zero, the prediction of relativity.

His effort was in part inspired by the results of Dayton Miller, who claimed to see a non-zero "ether drift" of 11 km/s (mentioned in that article without naming him). Miller's result was puzzling in his day, because there was no good argument for why it was invalid. We have since learned a lot about data analysis and digital signal processing, and there is a solid argument for rejecting Miller's result:  
<http://arxiv.org/abs/physics/0608238> .

(That webpage has not accepted my comment.)

Tom Roberts

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