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## Letters

### Quantum coin

David Mermin's quantum baseball philosophy ("Quantum Baseball," SN: 8/5/89, p.88) appears unnecessarily complicated.

Real detectors don't flash red or green; they either flash or don't flash. If they flash, particles of the right orientation are getting through. If they don't flash, either nothing is happening or the particles of the wrong orientation are coming our way.

A better analogy of the correlated photon phenomenon is a spinning coin. We can't tell whether it's heads or tails until we stop it and look at it. Determining the orientation of one side of the coin also determines that of the other side — only in the quantum mechanical case, the coin is not two-sided but multi-dimensional, creating the illusion of action at a distance.

Andrejs Baidins  
Wilmington, Del.

## This Week

- 212 'Optical Matter' Emerges Under Laser
- 212 Greenery filters out indoor air pollution
- 213 Hills point to catastrophic Ice Age floods
- 213 Soil nitrogen leaves methane up in the air
- 214 Fitness lowers young blacks' blood pressure
- 214 Weighing the CHAMPions of the universe
- 215 Cloud links quasars to Seyfert galaxies
- 215 Rats yield active clues to drug addiction
- 215 Orange you glad? Fido sees the blues

## Research Notes

- 222 Chemistry
- 223 Biology
- 223 Space Sciences

## Articles

- 216 Mystery Amoeba
- 218 Galileo to Jupiter

Cover: The Galileo spacecraft, depicted here near Jupiter and its moon Io (in the foreground), will fly past Venus, Earth (twice) and two asteroids during its loop-the-loop journey. After more than six years and some 3.86 billion kilometers, Galileo will send an instrumented probe plunging into Jupiter's stormy atmosphere and go into orbit around the giant planet to study it and its four big "Galilean" satellites. (Illustration: Jet Propulsion Laboratory)



## Departments

- 211 Letters
- 220 Books
- 220 Science on the Air

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### Ivory ban 'unfair'

The CITES specialists are incorrect in their contention that "all efforts to control the poaching of elephants for their ivory have failed" ("International tusk politics," SN: 8/5/89, p.94). It is ironic that this information was reported at a meeting in Botswana. While it is true that poaching has not been controlled in countries such as Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda, poaching has been controlled very effectively in Botswana, Zimbabwe and South Africa, and the latter three countries have had significant and consistent increases in their elephant populations, even to the extent where they must frequently reduce elephants' numbers to prevent overutilization of the animals' habitats. In Zimbabwe, for example, professionals under close government supervision conduct an annual "culling" of elephant herds, from which all products (ivory, hides and meat) are fully utilized.

A universal ban on ivory imports by the United States and other signatories of the

CITES treaty will unfairly penalize those countries that have managed to develop effective antipoaching measures and have become the models of intelligent elephant conservation. Rather than penalizing these nations, perhaps we should be asking how they have been so successful, and why Kenya and Tanzania, for example, have failed so miserably.

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All letters subject to editing.

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211