

HARVEY FISHPLATZ AND THE MYSTERIES OF THE UNIVERSE

It was a little past two on a mid-July afternoon when Harvey Fishplatz, lecturer for the Committee on the Social History of Ideas, Harvard University, discovered a loop in the space-time continuum. The tunnel, known in the physics community as a “wormhole,” but thought until that point to be a purely theoretical possibility, did not lead from one universe to another, as physicists had theorized it might, or from one era of history to the next, as others hoped it could, but, rather, from one section of Cambridge, Massachusetts, to another section not terribly far away. More specifically, the wormhole led from the intersection of Brattle and Mt. Auburn streets to the intersection, roughly one mile north-east, of Concord and Garden. Because he tended not to have a good sense of direction to begin with, Fishplatz couldn’t be sure how long this wormhole had been around without his noticing.

It was his challenged instinct for navigation that led to his making the discovery in the first place: Unable to find the way from his apartment to the office of his new chiropractor, he’d pulled out a map to consult. On the map, Mt. Auburn intersected with Brattle, which intersected with Appleton, which was home to Dr. Zoa’s Herbal Care and Health Clinic. But each time he tried to follow this route, driving eastward from Watertown along Mt. Auburn, he only got so far as the intersection with Fresh Pond Lane – spying Brattle ten feet in front of him – before he