

Preface to the Second Edition

It sometimes occurs to readers of the original edition of *Physics Over Easy* to wonder whether the reported breakfast conversations actually took place or whether they were invented by the author. Let me reassure you, they did take place as originally reported in the Introduction. So when I was invited to write an updated second edition, I wondered how I could continue maintaining that format. Since both my wife Beth and I had retired, our lifestyle changed and so did the circumstances that prompted the original discussions. Nevertheless, when she learned that I had agreed to write a second edition, Beth insisted that I brief her on the new material as I covered it. Thus we continued to conduct periodic conversations on physics, but they were no longer limited to breakfasts but also included our other meals. Slightly edited versions of these discussions are reported in Chapters 19 through 24. The earlier parts of the book are pretty much unchanged from the original, other than for some minor corrections.

The new material describes more recent discoveries that matured during the past decades. Most are still ongoing and should be viewed as work in progress. The original book did not include them because our understanding was too incomplete at the time of its writing. This is an exciting time for physicists. New and more sensitive probes are being sent aloft on satellites to study the cosmos. More powerful accelerators are coming on line to look for the Higgs and solidify our understanding of the subatomic world. Experimentalists are seeking practical

applications of nanoscale materials and probing ways to use the weirdness of quantum mechanics in useful devices and theorists are seeking ways to expand Grand Unified Theories (GUTS) to encompass all of physics. I hope that you'll enjoy perusing a glimpse of these exciting developments.

Leonid V. Azaroff