

THE JREF MILLION-DOLLAR CHALLENGE

All this brings us to the Subject of the Week here on SWIFT.

It was March 6th, 1998, when the JREF Million-Dollar Challenge first came into existence. That's almost ten years ago. It's always been a simple, direct, matter: do what you claim you can do of a paranormal nature, and walk away with the prize. Our expectations at first were that we'd attract major personalities by this means, but they've avoided having to take the test by simply not applying; those who have actually applied are generally honestly self-deluded persons who have difficulty stating what they can do, which can be understood if they really don't know what they're experiencing; we at JREF have gone through involved procedures to help them recognize their problems. Usually, they have indicated that they don't know what real scientific rules are, when it comes down to their actually being properly tested.

All this is obvious to anyone who has followed the action over the last decade. Now, while the JREF earns a certain income from having the prize money very conservatively invested, that sum could certainly be used more productively if it were made freely available to us.

As of March 6th, 2010 – twelve years after the challenge was first offered – it will be.

The James Randi Educational Foundation Million-Dollar Challenge will be discontinued 24 months from this coming March 6th, and those prize funds will then be available to generally add to our flexibility. This move will free us to do many more projects, which will be announced at that time.

This means that all those wishing to be claimants are required to get their applications in before the deadline, properly filled out and notarized as described in the published rules.

Now, we're sure that there will be those who will offer all kinds of objections to this decision – though they could have simply applied and won the prize. There will be accusations that the JREF is concerned about the safety of the prize money – which was never any sort of concern, I can assure you – and there will be more claims that the money was never there in the first place. I can see the professionals out there sighing in relief that they no longer have to answer questions about why they won't take the prize, and they'll just wait out the remaining period that the prize is available. All that's to be expected.

Ten years is long enough to wait. The hundreds of poorly-constructed applications, and the endless hours of phone, e-mail, and in-person discussions we've had to suffer through, will be things of the past, for us at the JREF.

Those who believe they have mystic powers now have two full years to apply... Let's see what happens.