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## Pizza and Subway Tokens



In 1964 Eric Bram, a teenager living on the Upper West Side of Manhattan, noticed that the price of a slice of pizza in New York was the same price as a subway token (both cost 15 cents in 1964). Bram made the correlation while riding the subway to the 1964 World's Fair in Flushing Meadows with a quarter in his pocket. He would sneak into the fair with his good friend Ralph Paluso, but worried what he would do for lunch since he had to save 15 cents for the ride home. In succeeding years Bram noticed that the pizza slice and subway token rose together in cost, and in 1980, noting that the price of a slice of pizza had recently risen, alerted *The New York Times* that accordingly, a rise in the price of a subway token was imminent. *The Times* published this prediction, which proved correct, and since then the Bram Correlation has remained startlingly accurate as fares have risen from 50 cents (in 1980) to two dollars today.

In a 1985 op-ed article in the *New York Times*, a writer named George Fasel also made the connection, as both the cost of a slice and a subway token rose to one dollar.

*The Times* revisited the so-called "Fasel Theorem" in 1995, and then twice in 2002 in two columns written by Clyde Haberman. In the second of those columns Haberman, after delving into *The Times* archives, revealed Bram as the originator of the theory. Fasel, in a letter-to-the-editor, conceded that Bram was the originator of the idea, but said he hadn't known of Bram's discovery when he wrote his 1985 op-ed piece.

In 2003, *The New Yorker* also wrote about the Bram Correlation in a "Talk of the Town" piece, explaining that *The New Yorker* story coincided with the rise of subway fare to \$2.00, which brought it in line with a cost of a slice (the subway fare had been \$1.50 since 1995, while the price of a slice had grown incrementally to around \$2.00).

In 2005 the *Times*' Haberman placed a frantic call to Bram (whom he now referred to as the "Pizza Connection"), when he noticed the price of a slice rising to \$2.25 in Midtown Manhattan. Bram, now a patent attorney up in Westchester County, concluded that a hike in subway fares was inevitable, but he also expressed doubt as to whether the correlation between subway fares and pizza slices would remain accurate now that use of the subway token itself was being discontinued. The Metropolitan Transit Authority, which oversees the subways and buses in New York, is reportedly considering a fare hike, though there is no word on whether they will base it on the cost of a slice of pizza.

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