

LETTERS

these groups. The Nuclear Defense Laboratory has been seeking a director for this tandem facility for better than a year. We have recommended that the management consider for this position a young person experienced in accelerator physics and have made suggestions of people who might be approached. We urge the physics community to assist the Nuclear Defense Laboratory in this task. The researchers in this facility will have the opportunity to do nuclear research in a youthful environment with the satisfaction of knowing that they are serving their country well. Under proper direction the talented young PhD's already present will form a competent research group for the tandem accelerator.

J. L. FOWLER

Oak Ridge National Laboratory

E. C. CRITTENDEN JR

US Naval Postgraduate School

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Los Alamos Scientific Laboratory

R. R. BORCHERS

University of Wisconsin

B. K. Barnes and his colleagues are mistaken in some of their assumptions. We did not ignore communications from the Army Materiel Command. In fact many basic details included in the story were provided by Brig. Gen. William A. Becker of AMC in a letter of 1 June; approximately one third of the article's final column provides comments from AMC personnel.

We attempted to get even more information directly from AMC. When we called the arsenal, we were allowed to talk with Lt. Col. Harold E. Shaw, whom we asked for any and all facts about the tandem. He conveyed to us only a minimum of information, all of which we put in the story. We are sorry that when we asked Shaw whether we could speak to others at the arsenal, we were not encouraged to discuss matters with the resident physicists. Their assessment of the current status of the tandem facility would have lent an added perspective to our story and given it greater depth and substance. The letter of Barnes and his colleagues gives us the opportunity to present some of the information we could not acquire earlier.

We are happy that the letter writers are optimistic and wish them luck with shielding, recruitment and operation.

—THE EDITORS

The original review

The "publications explosion," as it is sometimes called, appears to lead to considerable anomalies in refereeing as I hope the following little incident will illustrate.

Towards the end of 1966 I submitted to *Reviews of Modern Physics* a paper whose title, although irrelevant at present, was "Application of Corepresentation Theory to Crystal Field Theory." The following reply was obtained after the editor had consulted his referee: "Recently we have had to be more strict in the policy of accepting only review papers rather than original research. On this basis we are unable to accept your paper . . ." I was somewhat surprised because this was the first time that a journal had rejected anything of mine for being too original; in the rat race to publish, the usual complaint heard

THE EDITORS REPLY: We agree heartily that *PHYSICS TODAY*, like any magazine, should report news accurately and responsibly. Where responsibility is concerned, we feel part of it is to report controversial stories as well as noncontroversial ones. We regret that controversial stories must occasionally embarrass some who are involved.

We are pleased that neither of the preceding letters challenges any of the facts of our story except possibly in the following instances: (a) The reader might infer from our story that the Nuclear Defense Laboratory civilian PhD physics staff has only one member although, as the story says, we described a situation two years ago. The point we wished to make is that young nuclear physicists, Army or civilian, are not capable of directing so large a facility. (b) Concerning Argonne's proposal, our information from Jerry Marion as received from persons involved at Argonne was that ANL first asked for the entire machine but then later sought only the tank and column.



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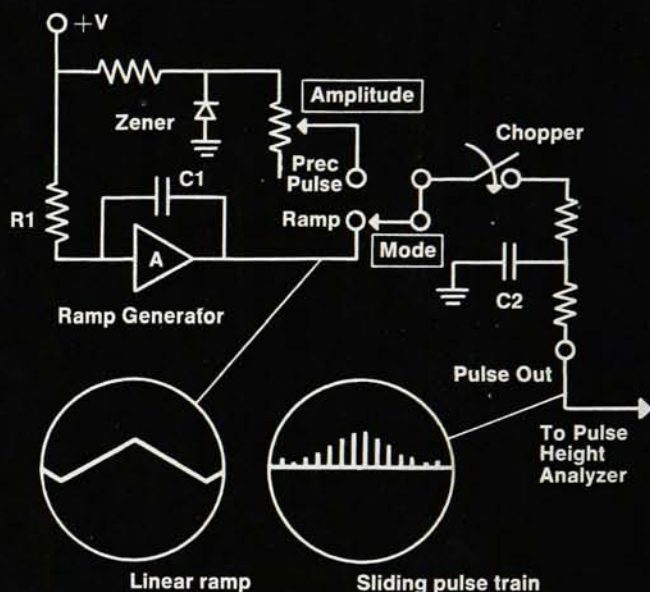
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LETTERS

from editors is of lack of originality. Encouraged by being told that what I had intended, at least partially, as a review article was really "original research" I took courage and submitted the same paper, in identical form, to *The Physical Review*. The editor's reply was to the effect that in view of his referee's report he could not publish the paper: "It is the considered opinion of this referee that the above paper contains virtually no new material and that it should not under any circumstances be accepted for publication in *The Physical Review* . . . This paper . . . contains virtually no new information and is clearly inappropriate for *The Physical Review*. The material contained therein appears to be essentially correct, such that it might serve as a good review. . ."

As I see it a referee is required to do two things: (1) to advise the editor whether a submitted paper is on topics in line with the declared editorial policy of the journal in question and (2) to advise the editor in certain detailed technical matters such as originality or correctness of a paper. The first is clearly a matter that is partially subjective, and one accepts editors' decisions in this matter, but the second seems to me rather a matter of fact or objectivity. How is it, I wonder as a puzzled foreigner from Britain, that the referees of two such distinguished and closely related journals as *The Physical Review* and *Reviews of Modern Physics* can come to such diametrically opposed views as to whether a certain piece of work is "original research" or a "review"?

In bewilderment and disillusionment about the objectivity of American refereeing I have now submitted the same paper to a third journal, this time a British one.

ARTHUR P. CRACKNELL
University of Essex

Unrelated articles

In the June 1967 issue of *PHYSICS TODAY* there appear two seemingly unrelated articles. One is the interesting article by Alvin Weinberg and the other is the hilarious report by Van Derck Fréchette and Ralph H. Condit.

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