

LETTERS

Difficulties of relocation

The American Physical Society Council states that the 1970 annual meeting cannot be relocated at this late date. They further state their opinion that the move would be a political action. Many argue that APS is, has been and should be apolitical. I tend to agree. On the other hand, *physicists*, as individuals should *not* be apolitical. Those who found Mayor Daley's actions at the Democratic Convention arrogant, heinous and antidemocratic have a clear and direct means of protest: It is *not* too late to cancel reservations, withdraw abstracts and refuse lecture invitations. I, for one, shall not appear at Chicago in person or in print.

THOMAS B. W. KIRK
Cambridge, Massachusetts

A REPLY FOR APS: The editor has given me an opportunity to comment on Thomas Kirk's letter, and I will do so for two reasons: (1) I agree with everything he says except his last sentence. If I agreed with that statement, the last council vote on the annual meeting would not have reaffirmed the Chicago site unanimously. And also, I would not now be the APS president. (2) The council was informed by staff members of APS and American Insti-

tute of Physics with extensive experience in convention management and many personal contacts in the hotel fraternity that the annual meeting could not be moved without changing its character rather severely. We were advised that the 40 000 square feet of exhibition space we normally require was unobtainable without a lead time of at least two years. Speaking only for myself, I can say I am embarrassed to learn, through the courtesy of Jay Orear, that the staff work was both incomplete and incorrect. But having listened to the arguments in the council, I feel confident that the knowledge that Cleveland could take care of our requirements would not have persuaded the council to move the meeting from Chicago to Cleveland. I will make no predictions concerning the council's decision at the end of April, when we will have an accurate measure of the feelings of the members of the society, as well as an alternative location available. I can only assure the members of the society that the council will discharge to the best of its ability its constitutional responsibility to represent *all* of the members of the society.

LUIS W. ALVAREZ
President, APS

Purposes of universities

Upon reading your editorial ("D. Phys. or D. Phil.?" in the January PHYSICS TODAY I was struck again—as I have been times before—by the strange assumption most North Americans seem to take as gospel truth: that only by a "liberal" university education, as distinct from a specialized one, can a person become broadly educated.

Now although I received my high-school education in Germany, I did almost all my university work in Canada and never took any nonscience course for credit at the university level. In spite of that, even my colleagues in the faculty of arts consider me well educated. I am familiar with English, American, German, French and Russian history and literature. Plato, Kant, Hegel, Leibnitz, Spinoza, Hume, Locke, Bergson, Whitehead, Russell and Wittgenstein are not strangers to me. Neither are Marx,

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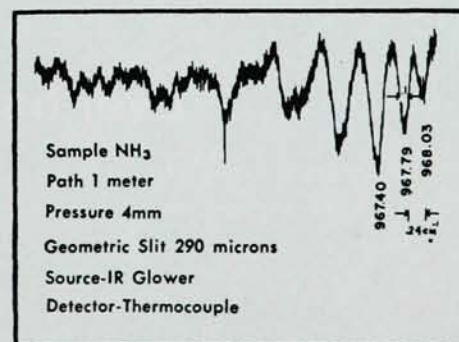
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Proposition

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CHECK ONE

- ☐ I believe the Council should reverse its decision and not hold the Annual Meeting in Chicago in 1970.
- ☐ I believe the Council should not reverse its decision and should hold the 1970 Annual Meeting in Chicago as scheduled.

THIS PROPOSITION SHOULD BE VOTED UPON AND RECEIVED BY THE TELLERS PRIOR TO 9 APRIL 1969.

Important

To validate your vote, the return envelope must be



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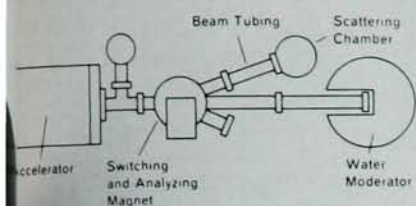
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Weber, Freud, Fromm or McLuhan. With the help of a dictionary I can still translate Latin and Greek authors et al, and I am up to date on current events. The foundations and initial momentum for these interests were laid during my school years at an age when these were much easier achieved than is possible at the university level. And I am by no means exceptional as anyone will probably be able to confirm from his own experience with Europeans of similar background. Also, every available evidence indicates that there is absolutely no innate difference between European and North American youth.

It appears to me that for purely historical reasons any serious educational efforts in North America are delayed and relegated to the university with progressively more disastrous results: The present strains—both economic and social strains—under which our universities creak appear to me to result from the dual and nearly incompatible roles forced upon the universities: (1) to train scholars in depth and (2) to provide a broad education for the masses—and to do both in a traditionally fixed number of years. Everything—motivations, interest, breadth and depth—has to be generated and provided for in one institution, and this is compounded by society's insistence on the university degree for almost any job, forcing kids into institutions for which they are not equipped by motivation, talent or ability.

I have a high respect for the competent electronic technician, car mechanic, paper hanger, who never came close to a university. They are usually bright, successful and happy people. The fellow who with many groans and after endless frustrations finally barely manages to get a BSc is a sorry and useless creature. He is more often than not frustrated and hence unhappy and moreover doesn't usually know what to do with himself. Nor does anybody else know what to do with him.

I believe it is high time we seriously questioned the purposes served by our universities at this time. Let our schools provide what they could and should provide: an education. And let us create a multitude of channels by which people, according to their talents, abilities, interests and motivations, can develop successfully to

some competence. Then the university can return to the role for which it is uniquely equipped and be a training ground for scholars and professionals.

Let's face the facts: a BA or BSc for everyone does *not* constitute a passport for success, nor is it a guarantee of becoming an educated person, nor is it the only way to become educated.

K. E. RIECKHOFF
Simon Fraser University

High standards and education

It appears to me that the editorial "D. Phil or D. Phys.?" (PHYSICS TODAY January, page 154) belonged in a sociology journal. If one wishes to study education or sociology, let him do so. However, I find it unconvincing that he then is better prepared to analyze the issues of the day. I believe the two indicated solutions—to put physics education into the hands of educators and to keep standards high—are mutually exclusive. Having corrupted our elementary schools and high schools, shall we now corrupt the universities?

GEORGE ADOMIAN
University of Georgia

Not-so-special rates

I should like to urge strongly that the placement of notices in the *Bulletin of the American Physical Society* advertising "possible flight arrangements at reduced rates" available to APS members traveling to meetings be stopped immediately unless special APS rates are in fact being offered.

Recently in accordance with the instructions of these notices, I wrote to ("contacted") Emily Wolf of the American Institute of Physics inquiring about reduced rates for travel to the coming New York meeting. In response I received a form letter from the Galatti Travel Service, Inc., of New York offering a 25% reduction in air fare between New York and 14 named American cities "based on the 30-Day See America Excursion Fare." Some APS members may not already know that the 30-day excursion fares are offered by any travel agent in the United States on round-trip flights between any two American cities to be made by anybody whose schedule meets the conditions on time of departure and return stated in the Galatti letter. Therefore I suggest that these notices in the *Bulletin*,