PHIMSY

For the man with no needs

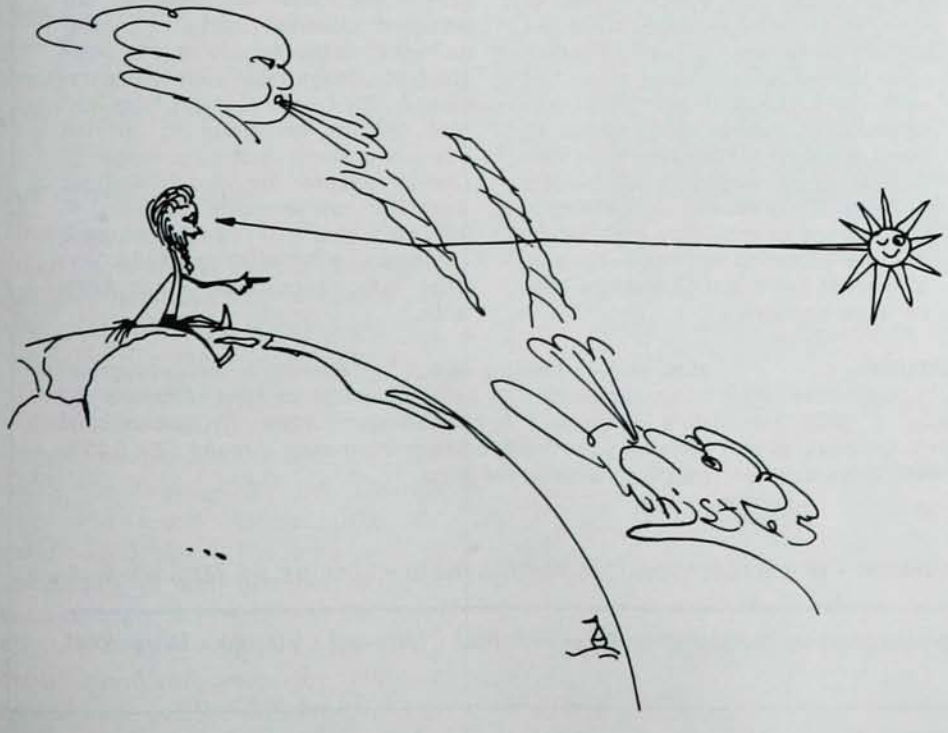
A recent gift delights me. It looks like two 1.75-inch pieces of wire, one red, one blue, held together at the ends with yellow tape. It has all the desirable attributes: inspected, checked, trouble-free, meets or exceeds specifications, no moving parts, simplicity of design, low cost, protective carrying box. What else could you want?

The literature tells me that you too can have a genuine improved no. 7 BunaB for sending $0.98 to Orville K. Snav & Associates, 111 North Jefferson, Mason City, Iowa. I like attacks on jargon and other nonproductive conventions.

Schlieren Effect

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
Schlieren effect near and far
Tricks your flick'ring now and then
By a gradient of N,
Which, perturbed by wind and weather,
Makes your rays go titter totter.
You stand firmly where you are
While you're twinkling, little star.

BOYE AHLBORN
University of British Columbia
(illustration by the author)



NBS metric wall chart

As you carry on the crusade for better units, I hope you have the National Bureau of Standards wall chart titled "The Modernized Metric System." Last January a copy of it, reduced to one-third size, was a two-page spread in the NBS *Technical News Bulletin*. It was part of an article called "Brief History and Use of the English and Metric Systems of Measurement." You can have your copy of the chart for 50¢ to the Government Printing Office, and in its many colors it makes a handsome decoration.

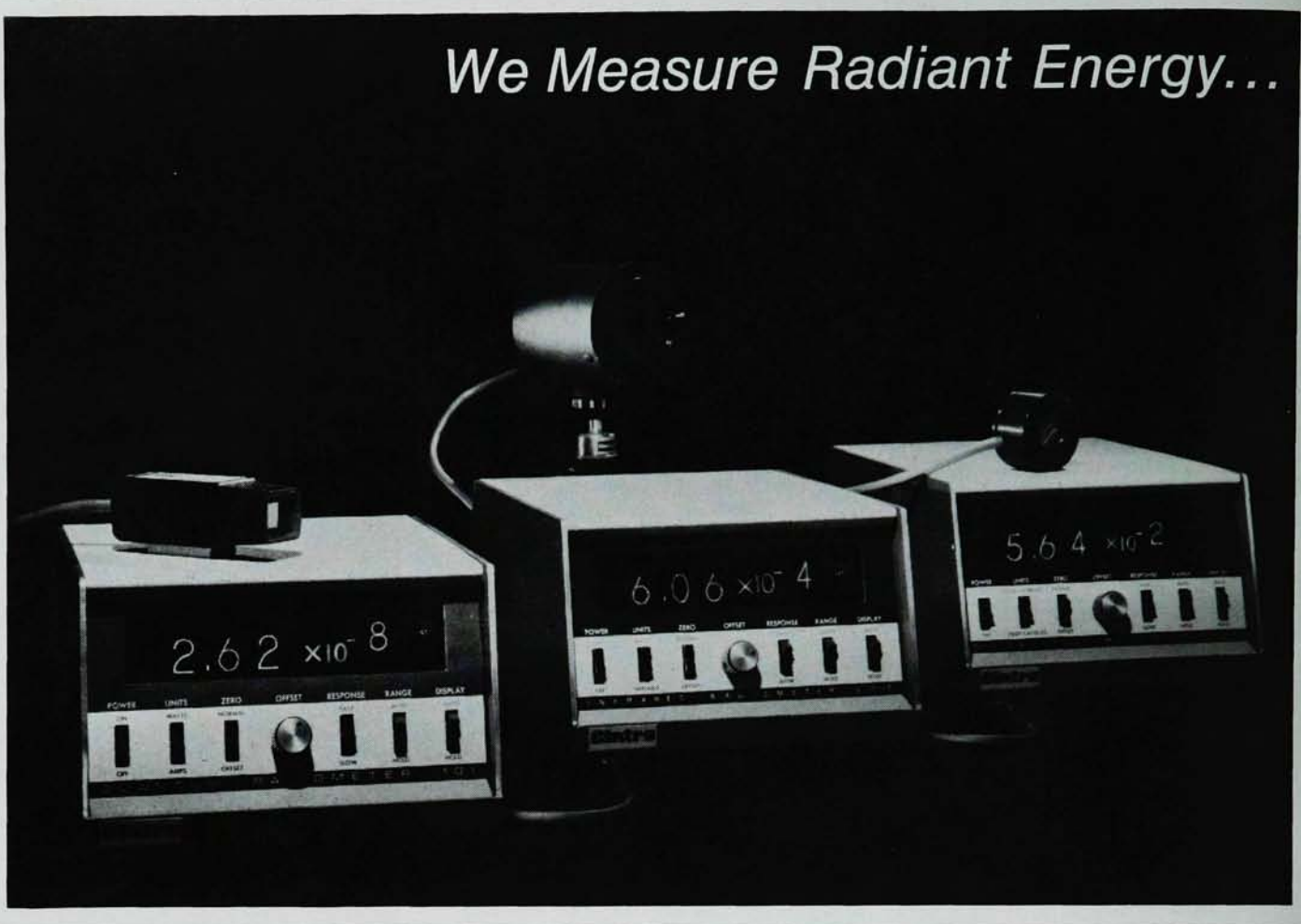
A page is a space is a page

Is there a Freudian slip, someone asked me, when *The Physical Review* has a title inside about "page charge" and the title on the outside cover has the words "space charge?"

Our German equivalent

I love to read the higher forms of flattery, especially when they flatter me and the boys I work with. Here's how a promotion letter started out: "I know you are interested in reaching the German market and I, therefore, want to acquaint you with PHYSI-

We Measure Radiant Energy...



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KALISCHE BLATTER the German counterpart of Physics Today."

Some attention from outside

When any of you fellows make noise in the world of nonphysicists, it makes me happy. A recent joy was the 2.5 pages that the 29 March *New Yorker* gave to Polykarp Kusch in its prestigious opening section called "The Talk of the Town." The interview honored Kusch's elevation to vice-president and dean of faculties at Columbia.

My editor friends tell me the interviewer's most perceptive question was, "Do you always talk this way?" (He does.)

The item was full of insights into what makes Kusch, with or without a Nobel prize, unique among physicists. One that we enjoyed was his reflection on his undergraduate physics at Case: "heavily classical . . . technically oriented . . . one course I took was called Foundry Practice."

"At Columbia, after the war," Kusch is quoted as saying, "everybody worked like mad." He explained that wartime physics was sterile with "few new conceptual ideas."

I liked the concluding quotation: "My faith in the future of learning and in the future of knowledge is very great, and my faith in the university as the seat of learning and knowledge is very great." So be it.

Meanwhile a former Kusch student at Columbia, Harold Brown, who was Secretary of the Air Force and is now Cal Tech president, has written "Security through Limitations" in the April *Foreign Affairs*.

Never trust anybody

Here I am writing PHYSICS TODAY copy on an airplane. One of the passengers has protested that the captain is not taking him where he wants to go. He suggested that the captain move aside and give his seat to the protester, who is under 30. That brought further argument from a man under 20. The logic was inescapable; the younger man was more eligible than the middle-aged one. The logic was so compelling, in fact, that the youngest passenger on the plane, a five-year-old, is now in the captain's seat. We are all wondering where he will take us and how well he will land. □