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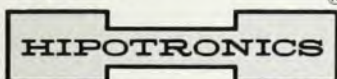
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letters

mere cataloguing of facts. As I read through sections on material that I was not very familiar with, very little interest or desire to learn more was aroused. In short, I would like to suggest that the physics community should begin taking a hard look at these textbooks (and the people who write them).

JERRY WEBB

University of Arkansas
Monticello

Revise NSF evaluations

Very often a system that operates is never improved because folks are too busy operating the old method. As an improvement in one system, I wish to suggest a change in how NSF evaluates proposals. Presently, they obtain criticism from different referees. Then NSF assumes that referees are infallible and conclude their evaluation with this information. However, referees are human, so errors in judgement or ignorance may occur. Why not let the principal investigator write a rebuttal to the comments of the referees *before* a non-commutable life-or-death decision is reached about a proposal?

The above suggestion is not radical or impractical. The presently established system of reviewing articles for journals includes a return of the article and the referee's comments to the author so that misunderstandings may be clarified by the author. Because the referee's review is analyzed by the writer, and vice versa, wrong opinions can be corrected. With regard to the review of contracts, there is no feedback to the author before a final decision is reached. Thus, misconceptions or hastily formed opinions can never be corrected. One may also complain that a rebuttal procedure would require too much time; but when a six-month interval expires between submission and evaluation of a proposal, another month is negligible if you obtain a system that is less subject to error. Can the government afford not to select a more honest approach with its services to the people?

ROBERT L. CHAPLIN
Clemson University

Corrections

September, page 65—The new book listing for *Mechanics, Berkeley Physics Course, Vol. I* should state that it is the second edition, revised by A. C. Helmholz and B. J. Moyer.

page 96, first column, line 20 from bottom—"third electron" should read "3d electron."

page 96, second column, line 8 of last paragraph—"this particular discipline" should read "his particular discipline." □

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