

Reaching the public via Store Front Physics

The winners of the Store Front Physics contest that was announced in August are: Joseph Pizzo, associate professor of physics at Lamar University, Beaumont, Texas; Laurie P. Eason and Alan J. Friedman, division of astronomy education at the Lawrence Hall of Science, University of California, Berkeley, and Thomas C. Campbell, assistant professor in the mathematics and science division of Illinois Central College, East Peoria.

Shoppers at the Parkdale Mall in Beaumont, Texas found a new diversion in Pizzo's exhibit, which invited all who passed to learn about "The Relation Between Electric Field and Voltage." Pizzo and members of the Society of Physics Students chapter at Lamar University designed the exhibit and poster display which produced a spectacular discharge when the visitor put his finger in the proper spot to develop a sufficiently large electric field.

About one third of the people who noticed the exhibit stopped to examine it. Some went off to get friends and family to bring them back to investigate, and a number of them stayed to ask the students on duty for more information.

Eason and Friedman placed their exhibit in the elevator in the Lawrence Hall of Science, the science center for the general public at the University of California, Berkeley. They installed a single pivot, rigid beam balance and a spring scale on the wall of the elevator and put an ordinary bathroom scale on the elevator floor so that passengers could measure their change in weight during the elevator ride and learn about the effect of acceleration on mass and weight.



"Seeing the Retina," Thomas C. Campbell's mobile exhibit, is put to use by a student at Illinois Central College. Campbell was one of three winners in the Store Front Physics contest.

Some riders who were enthusiastic about the exhibit were equally insistent that the bathroom scales "just had to be off." Written comments from riders and those collected by observers who just rode along to watch and listen were used to evaluate and modify the exhibit.

Campbell mounted his exhibit, "Seeing the Retina," on a wooden laboratory cart so that it could be moved through hallways of a large multi-purpose building visited by some 3000 people each day. Campbell found that about one quarter of the building's daily visitors took the opportunity to see their own retinas, learn about spherical concave mirrors and about the structure and function of the parts of the eye.

Those who submitted the winning exhibits received checks for \$200 and were invited to present papers during a special session on Friday evening, 31 January, during the joint annual meeting of the American Physical Society and the American Association of Physics Teachers in Anaheim. The Committee on Science Education for the General Public that sponsored the contest draws its membership from both APS and AAPT.

Photocopies of the three winning entries, including instructions for replication of the exhibits, are available

from Mary L. Shoaf, The American Physical Society, 335 East 45th St., New York, N.Y. 10017.

Forum continues public-interest science awards

Action by the APS council has authorized the Forum on Physics and Society to continue to give awards in the area of public-interest science. The executive committee of the Forum has since appointed Elizabeth Baranger (University of Pittsburgh) as chairman, and Richard Lapidus (Stevens Institute of Technology), Eugen Merzbacher (Univ. of North Carolina), Martin Perl (Stanford Linear Accelerator Center) and Barry Casper (Carleton College) to serve on the Forum award selection committee that will choose nominees for the prizes to be awarded during the April meeting of the society in Washington. The selection committee will forward the names of its choices to the executive secretary, who will notify the council members and call for their approval of the nominees by the most appropriate method. No announcement of the names of the nominees will be made until council approval has been received. □

Reminder: 1975-76 Congressional Fellowships

Each applicant for a 1975-76 APS Congressional Scientist Fellowship should submit a resume and arrange for three letters of reference to be sent directly to Mary Shoaf, Administrator, Congressional Scientist Fellowship Program, APS, 335 East 45th Street, New York, N.Y. 10017. Applications are due by 15 March. (See PHYSICS TODAY, December, page 75.)