Soviets halt distribution

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The fourth exhibitor, Canberra Industries, also passed out eight copies before distribution was halted by show officials. Subsequently one of the exhibitors was questioned for three hours by two representatives from the Soviet Department of International and Foreign Exhibitions. The exhibitor was told that distributing the copies of PHYSICS TODAY was a grave matter that could have international consequences. He was required to seal up his remaining copies of PHYSICS TODAY and to write a letter explaining the reasons for distributing the issues.

Aspen physics center schedules workshops

The Aspen Center for Physics will hold its annual physics and astrophysics program during 31 May–30 August. The scheduled workshops are:

7–25 June
- Astrophysical environments for element production (special workshop)
- Quantum electrodynamics

28 June–25 July
- Non-linear waves
- Medium-energy nuclear physics

26 July–22 August
- Theory of condensed matter

26 July–3 September
- Particle physics

The primary emphasis will be on individual research and informal discussion. About 200 physicists normally participate, and all interested individuals are invited to apply.

For the astrophysics workshop only, contact James W. Truran, Astronomy Department, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill. 61801. Address all other inquiries to Sydney Meshkov, Radiation Theory Section 240.01, National Bureau of Standards, Washington, D.C. 20234. Deadline for applications is 1 February.

Advisory groups

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to continue serving on such an advisory group.

North Carolina. In the spring of 1975, Gerald Meisner, a physics professor at the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, approached his local Congressman, Richardson Preyer, about the possibility of setting up a science advisory group. Preyer acquiesced, and Meisner invited another physicist, Robert Muir, three chemists, two biologists and a geologist to join the group. All are from the Greensboro campus, except one from Guilford College and one from CIBA-Geigy.

Since its founding, the group has met five times with Preyer. At his request they have prepared two major advisory papers for him—one on commercial nuclear power reactors and one on energy conservation. The group also prepared summaries of these reports for Preyer and his assistant. A third, smaller paper was on the potential of nonpetroleum products as fuel.

New Jersey. Physicist George Gamota, a member of the technical staff at Bell Labs in Murray Hill, which is in the 12th New Jersey Congressional District, asked his local Congressman, Matthew Rinaldo, if he would like a science advisory council. That was in April, 1974, and Rinaldo responded by asking for comments on an environmental impact statement for the construction of a liquid natural-gas terminal in Staten Island, New York, which borders the district. Gamota found two willing workers—chemist Gerald Smolinsky and physicist Richard Cohen—and they prepared a report.

After Rinaldo was reelected in the fall, the council was officially organized in early January, 1975. Initially, it consisted of two chemists, two physicists, a computer scientist and a physician. Later they added a lawyer, a biochemist and a petroleum engineer.

Gamota, who was the chairman of the group, resigned in December, 1975, and took a leave of absence from Bell Labs to assume a research position in Washington, D.C., with the Department of Defense. He is being replaced by physicist Earl Shaw, also from Bell Labs, and the new group chairman is a chemist, Edwin Chandross.

Gamota says they have tried to have various disciplines and various parts of the district represented. They have sought on a nonpartisan basis, members who were not in management positions, and they feel that membership time should be limited to about two years. In addition to their work on liquid natural gas, the group has prepared reports on sludge dumping off coastal areas, right-to-privacy laws and computer capabilities.

Gamota feels giving Congressmen science advice is better done by groups such as his, rather than by individuals or professional societies, which often act independently of one another. "Few problems today are so narrow that a mingling of different scientific minds would not be an asset," he concludes.

—GBL

GAMOTA

Air Force labs lose 200 staff positions

The staff of the Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratories, Hanscom Air Force Base, Bedford, Massachusetts will be reduced by 200 positions by 30 June. A preliminary announcement was made on 11 November, designating the positions to be abolished. Sixty of these positions are in physics, geophysics and astrophysics, and about 30 of the 200 positions are currently vacant. The staff reductions are part of a new Defense Department policy to curtail in-house research (see PHYSICS TODAY, November, page 101). The Air Force Geophysics Laboratory will be formed from the remaining staff at AFCRL.

As part of the cutback, the Sacramento Peak Observatory in New Mexico will be greatly curtailed as part of the Air Force research effort. Negotiations are underway to enable the Observatory to continue operations under contract to a university, to the Energy Research and Development Administration or to the National Science Foundation. About 40 positions will be eliminated through the abolition of the Sacramento Peak group.

in brief

President Ford has signed into law a bill appropriating $710 million to the National Science Foundation for the 1976 fiscal year. The measure earmarks not more than $60 million for NSF's Research Applied to National Needs program, $50 million for science education programs and $4.5 million for the Intergovernmental Science and Research Utilization program. Another $167.6 million was appropriated for the transition period between the end of the 1976 fiscal year (30 June) and the start of the 1977 fiscal year (1 October). □