letters

Once upon a time, a quark
Was out there walking in the park,
Being glad he was alive,
Hoping that he would survive.

He'd read a lot of scary articles
About subatomic particles
And how they seem to come and go.
The physicists said it was so.

The quarks live with this certain sorrow:
Here today and gone tomorrow!
Existence is so tragicomic
When you are only subatomic.

Anyway, this little quark,
This one day out there in the park,
Was suddenly severely stricken
He felt his little heartbeat quicken

For heading toward him was this queen,
The prettiest quark he's ever seen.
The way she moved, the way she looked,
This poor old quark, his goose was cooked.

He'd had it now; he'd bought the farm,
This little quark had class, had charm.
Yes, that was it—and how alarming
To see a quark so very charming.
A thunderbolt came from above
And out tiny friend, he fell in love.

The evidence is inconclusive,
For charm is something so elusive,
But physicists are very straight
And they say quarks, indeed, do mate.

So this quark goes up and tips his hat,
And bows a bit, then tells her that
He is a quark alive and active
And that he finds her quite attractive.

And then he asks her for a date,
Only to hear the charmed quark state
She can't 'cause she's already hitched;
By an antiquark she's been bewitched.

And by the laws they function under
Quarks cannot be split asunder.

"Hold on there, kid!" our quark friend chimes,
"I just read in *The New York Times*
That if a quark like you is charmed
It cannot be destroyed or harmed."

And he shows this charming little particle
Walter Sullivan's front-page article.

"Well, I'll be darned!" she blushed and said,
As with interest she looked and read.

"Read on, my dear, there's even more."
And sure enough, there on page four,
The story was detailed, enlarged.
Our particle became so charged

That off they went, arm in arm,
Two happy quarks with special charm.

'Tis only theory, I fear,
But what a way to start the year.

Announcements

Newsbreak. Charles Osgood, CBS News.

Theorists would probably *not* agree with all aspects of this poetic interpretation of the quark but then the same complaint can be made about any other quark theory. We are sure that all physicists *will* agree with us in congratulating Osgood and CBS for choosing to start off the new year with this delightful contribution to public awareness.—*Editor*

Credit hour overload?

Please tell me that W. A. Sibley's otherwise reasonable letter to the editor (August 1975, page 11) referred to "1400 student credit hours per year" rather than "14 000." Otherwise, perhaps Sibley could elaborate upon the educational/research functions of his "full-time faculty of 20."

JOHN D. E. FORTNA
District of Columbia University

THE AUTHOR REPLIES: The number 14 000 student credit hours per year is correct. However, John Fortna has an excellent point. In shortening the article to letter length, I omitted the graduate-assistant teaching component and assumed that in most PhD-granting departments a one-half time graduate assistant per faculty member would be available to help meet this teaching load.

W. A. SIBLEY
Oklahoma State University
Stillwater, Oklahoma

Funding cutoff

Imagine the shock we felt when we learned on 9 January 1976 that funding for the entire Nuclear Sciences Program at Ames Laboratory and Iowa State University would cease at the end of FY 1976 (30 September 1976). This occurred in spite of recent excellent ratings in reviews of the quality and quantity of the research and in the face of continuing progress in exciting new experimental and theoretical directions. This late date of disclosure seriously hinders the possibility of our acquiring a new source of funding in time to maintain continuity in the TRISTAN research program.

Stimulated by the magnitude of our particular crisis, we feel that the cuts in real funding for nuclear sciences in the Division of Physical Research within ERDA should be brought to the immediate attention of all physicists—but especially those in nuclear sciences. Such cuts bring "the multifaceted program . . . perilously close to extinguishment."[1] One can only speculate that this funding picture stems from the inability of those in control of the funds to consider the nuclear-sciences program on its own merits.