

letters

Program at the National Institute of Neurological and Communicative Disorders and Stroke at NIH. My PhD in general has been a basic requirement for all of the positions I have held—and the fact that it is in physics has, at least, impressed potential employers—but the real point is that my graduate education, potentially valuable for the national defense, has been wasted. Fortunately, my career has been relatively exciting and rewarding.

Despite the anecdotal nature of this report, I think it is likely to be a general rule that women who have the qualifications necessary to assume a professorship in physics have already attained positions of responsibility in other fields, or in places outside the university. For the most part, they will be unwilling or unable to become professors of physics. In addition, it seems to me that it is certainly not effective to make up for past neglect by appointing people to senior positions for which they are not superbly qualified. There are perhaps senior research associates at one or two major universities who do meet the necessary criteria. The real point, however, is that it is quite ludicrous to suggest substantial increase in the percent of high-level, tenured women faculty at a time when the number of positions is, at best, not increasing and retirements are not expected to be effective in opening up slots until the 1990s.

In general, to make a plea to accomplish an important deed in a way and at a time that it cannot be done is a travesty as well as a disservice and discouragement to those women presently entering the field. It is not possible to correct decades of discrimination in a single fell swoop by placing non-existent senior women in non-existent positions. Instead, the few women recently and currently entering the field must be nurtured and allowed to develop to their full potential and then to achieve the positions for which they are well qualified.

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More on junk mail

Henry Blosser (April 1981, page 74) and John Vossen (August 1981, page 71) have both made pleas for help in getting rid of junk mail. Neither seems to have had any effect on this nuisance avalanche. (I've been saving it all religiously for 2½ years for statistical purposes and my bedroom is now crowded with bags and old suitcases of

the stuff, which drives my wife to distraction. I sent about 25 pounds of it to my senator once but never heard from him again.)

The truth is not generally recognized that the US Postal Service is in business principally to deliver junk mail; the first-class material is only a side issue. Instead of stuffing it all in the postage-paid envelopes and sending it back (which doesn't do any good if you have to go broke putting stamps on those that don't have the "No Postage Necessary" on the right) or sending it to the postmaster general, I think a better answer would be for us all to save it up for a month at a time and then mail the bundles of the stuff to our respective congressman. Their offices would soon be filled to the ceiling with these bundles, and the business of the US government would come to a screeching halt until this massive abuse was stopped.

WILLIAM B. ELMER

6/82

Thornton, New Hampshire

Complaint about authors

I am writing to draw attention to a bizarre grammatic practice, endemic among contributors to AIP journals, that seems to be spreading to physicists throughout the world.

It would be peculiar to pick up a paper with the section subheadings "Introductory," "Theoretical," "Resulting," "Discursive," "Concluding" and "Acknowledgemental," so why is "Experimental" considered acceptable?

J. M. D. COEY

6/82

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Microfiche journals

Please give very serious consideration to the letter by Dinh Ton-That (February, page 104) concerning microfiche editions of AIP journals for AIP members.

I am a member of both the AAPT and the IEEE. As a member of the IEEE's Computer Society, I receive the microfiche edition in lieu of the paper edition of *Computer* at no additional cost. If this alternative were not available, I would not subscribe to the paper edition—I don't have the room to store back issues in paper form. With my microfiche copies, I can store more than ten years of back issues of microfiche in less than the space of a single issue; I can copy any pages I need in hardcopy on the microfiche reader-copier at the local library.

I would *definitely* subscribe to more scientific journals (and popular magazines, for that matter) if the storage

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