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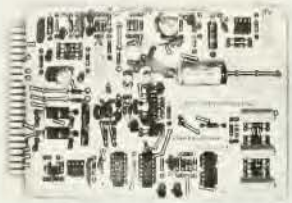

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letters

in many areas. I believe that physics embodies a way of looking at situations and a way of approaching analyses of them as well as being a body of knowledge.

BRADLEY L. JACOBS
Orange County Assessor
7/81 *Santa Ana, California*

Role of PHYSICS TODAY

In the June editorial "Nuclear War: Facing Reality" (page 104) Harold Davis briefly echos the call stressed by Andrei Sakharov—a call for noble, striving, concerned physicists to implement the concentric task of "speaking out for truth and the best interests of mankind." Although I'm sure no noble, striving, concerned physicist would avoid this challenge, I'm equally sure that noble, striving, concerned physicists everywhere are tired of having this aria resonate in their heads.

Davis has implied that the physics community is to blame for their lack of obedience to this universal cause. It is my opinion that physicists everywhere are dedicated and projecting their concerns to those who will listen. Governments, agencies, and monopolies are to blame for their obvious avoidance and suppression of the ideas and beliefs of the physics community. It is the duty of scientific journals to amplify the ideas and opinions of the physics community to inform the non-science oriented person, as well as to break the barriers built by governmental and economical superpowers. PHYSICS TODAY has always been a journal that has answered such a call, informing the public about the realities that physicists everywhere emphasize, and must continue to set the example for every scientific journal to follow.

GREGORY D. MCADOO
Noise Unlimited Inc.
7/81 *Somerville, New Jersey*

Manpower study

As a former physicist who had been forced to leave the profession due to lack of employment opportunities, I feel that the optimistic conclusions of Suzanne Ellis' manpower study must be viewed with caution, *particularly* in regard to academically oriented physicists. It is comforting to learn that only 2% of graduating PhD physicists received no job offers (except perhaps to the unemployed 2%). However, academic physicists have usually found it easy to find an initial postdoc position, and only ran into real difficulty when trying to land a tenure-track academic position two years later. It goes without saying that an assistant professor, at any but a handful of elite institutions, is virtually unemployable if his institution denies him tenure. The fact that "In each case the number of theorists receiving no offers was triple that of experimentalists" is merely another indication of the refusal of the federal government to adequately fund theoretical research, in comparison with the enormous amounts of money spent on experimental work.

I do not even regard the increasing number of foreign students as a panacea. The number of foreign students is dependent on economic and political conditions in a very volatile part of the world. I do not have to reiterate that colleges counting on an increasing number of Iranian students have been greatly disappointed.

ROBERT J. YAES
Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center
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THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: My "optimistic conclusions" are based on the improved job market for new physics doctorate recipients. The Graduate Student Survey report, which Yaes apparently refers to, states that 2% of the 1980 doctorate recipients were without *immediate* job offers; the follow-up survey of this group six months later reduces that figure to 0.5%. Two major factors responsible for the steady improvement since 1970 are: 1) the annual decline in doctoral-level graduates from 1545 in 1970 to 912 in 1980 and 2) the positive change in attitude of many recent doctorate recipients toward "non-traditional" employment.

Doctoral physicists have certainly taken advantage of expanding nonacademic opportunities during the past decade; however, in a recent AIP survey, nearly 40% of the physicists holding degrees from the 1970s were currently found to be employed in non-postdoctoral academic positions.

Although Yaes does express some valid concerns, it is important to recognize that changes have and continue to occur. Perhaps job satisfaction in addition to traditional goals are needed to guide evaluation of career opportunities.

SUSANNE D. ELLIS
American Institute of Physics
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Correction

The 4th IEEE International Pulsed Power Conference will be held 6–8 June 1983. It will occur in Albuquerque, New Mexico. The person to contact is J. T. Grant, Research Institute, University of Dayton, Dayton, Ohio 45469. Abstracts must be received by 4/9/82.□