

letters

ence. If we are about teaching, then a person who happens to be our student during part of their life is our focus and we spend the majority of our time and energy developing teaching styles and techniques to stimulate and encourage them to love physics as we do. If we choose to be a physicist, we research and write and explain to teachers what we have learned about the world and let them teach it! Although we would all like to think we are both teacher and physicist, for all but a very small percent of us this is wishful thinking. A master teacher is as skilled and profound in the art of teaching persons as an Einstein or Dirac is in the act of unveiling some of the underlying realities of our world. Do you really believe that?

The crisis in physics education is that we spend too much little time, research and involvement with the persons we call students. Student's desire to experience physics will grow in proportion to our ability to teach students about physics rather than teach physics to students! Students will have a way of getting the word around!

HORACE B. LUCIDO
De La Salle High School
Concord, California

3/82

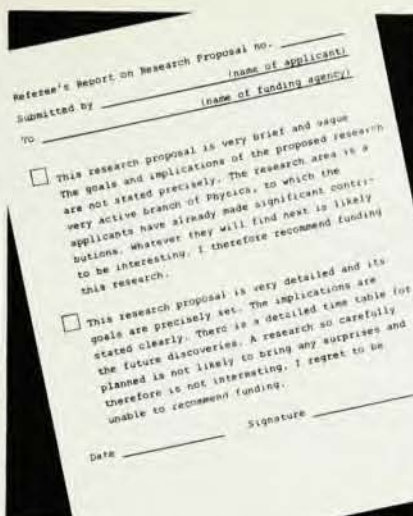
Solar correction

In the interests of accuracy, I would like to make a small correction to the caption for the cover photograph of a solar prominence on the cover of the April issue (page 3). The image is, indeed, computer-enhanced and from Skylab, as the caption states; however, the original was a digital spectrogram and not a photograph. The confusion probably arose because there were two uv telescopes on Skylab, one photographic (Naval Research Lab) and the other photoelectric (Harvard College Observatory). The cover photograph happens to be one of eighty HCO pictures published in *A New Sun*, *The Solar Results from Skylab* (J. A. Eddy, NASA). These and many other such HCO digital images were prepared by myself and John Lyon at Johnson Space Flight Center using image enhancement hardware and software developed for the analysis of Earth imagery obtained by the Landsat program.

The particular picture on the cover of PHYSICS TODAY shows the outermost skin of solar prominence, where the temperatures range from 10^4 – 10^6 K. This regime is visible only in the extreme ultraviolet and was studied exhaustively in the years following Skylab by means of such euv images.

E. J. SCHMAHL
University of Maryland
College Park, Maryland

5/82



Standard referee's report

Funding agencies have streamlined their paperwork by having standard questionnaires for grant applications and for referees' reports. As I occasionally am a referee, I have prepared a standard report (see figure) to reduce my own paper work. Just fill in the blanks and tick the right answer!

ASHER PERES
Haifa, Israel

1/82

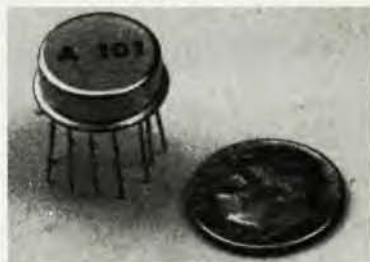
Creationism

It is hard to convey my feelings about the news item on creationists (February, page 53). That in our age science could possibly have to get involved in arguments of this sort is in itself mind-boggling. Is this really happening in a nation that receives the most science Nobel prizes each year, that shows to the world close-up photographs from the outer reaches of the solar system? Or is this a sign of just what kind of freaks a democratic system has room for? Or are these the first outgrowths of a deteriorating education system? What, for example, happened to Berkeley biochemistry that one of its PhD graduates manages to say something to the effect that "there are only two models on origin, so any evidence against one is proof for the other." I had to rub my eyes twice before I actually believed I had read this! Never mind arguments about specific issues and factors of 10^7 in the meteoric influx rate. If there were anything to creationism, three hundred years of exact science would have pointed towards it, not away from it. It is the fact, however, that creationists start to fiddle with public-school science classes that turns this whole issue from a hilarious idiosyncrasy into a possible nightmare.

Meanwhile, space science and nu-

continued on page 80

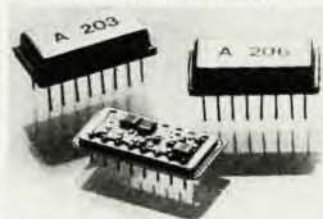
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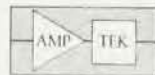


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