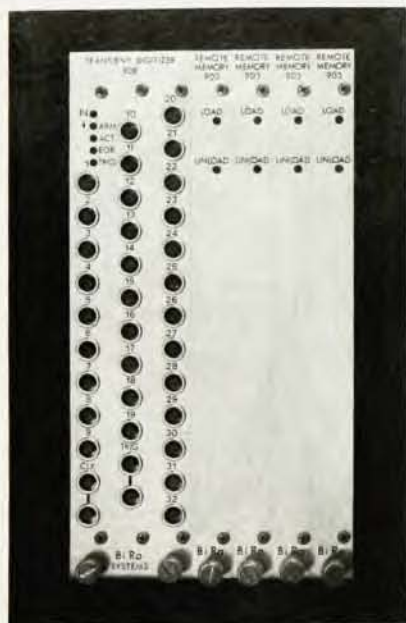


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letters

proportionately) amounts to 1.1% of the annual research budget. Considering its effect on the promulgation of our output, I must consider the cost/benefit ratio as quite outstanding.

Ross should understand that low-cost member subscriptions do *not* contribute to the income of the publishing enterprise; they are supplied, at purely incremental costs for printing and mailing, as a convenience to members. If no one orders them at all, there would be no net effect on the income supporting publications. Ross prefers a well-organized reprint collection to a shelf of *Physical Review*; so do I, but it would be pretty hard to assemble reprints of the innumerable *unpublished* papers which would likely ensue if page charges were dropped and libraries had to bear the full cost of journal production! Personally, I don't shelve my copies of the *Physical Review*; I simply cut them up at the end of each year and, *voilà!*—instant reprints.

DAVID LAZARUS

Editor-in-chief

6/82

The American Physical Society

Political letters

I assumed that PHYSICS TODAY was essentially devoted to physics and its trends rather than involved in political controversy. I was, therefore, more than astonished to find published a letter such as John Makhoul's (May, page 122). There is enough chaos and meddling in this troubled world without the virulent demagoguery inflicted by such letters. These are normally forwarded to the daily papers where they belong.

YARIV PORAT

Naval Research Laboratory
Orlando, Florida

6/82

THE AUTHOR COMMENTS: My letter was written to add some relevant factual information to a news item carried by PHYSICS TODAY (August, page 53) about the Israeli bombing of the Iraqi nuclear reactor. If Porat feels that the subject of the spread of nuclear weapons involves "political controversy" and, therefore, should not be discussed in PHYSICS TODAY, that is his prerogative. I, for one, applaud this journal for carrying news items and letters that are of deep concern to the scientific community. It is unfortunate that Porat feels it necessary to resort to inflammatory language that could be interpreted as an attempt at censorship.

Finally, I find it interesting that Porat should choose my letter to criticize for supposed political content and did not choose, for example, the letter

in the same issue (May, page 118) by six "scientific workers and citizens of the Soviet Union of Jewish origin" who have been denied an exit visa from the USSR to Israel. Or is the issue of exit visas somehow nonpolitical?

JOHN MAKHOUL

Bolt, Beranek and Newman
Cambridge, Massachusetts

7/82

Computer misidentification

The picture of J. R. Oppenheimer and John von Neumann in front of a computer, mentioned in Yale Jay Lubkin's letter in May (page 116), is reproduced in "The Computer from Pascal to von Neumann" by H. H. Goldstine (and on the cover of the paperback edition). The computer is there called "the IAS, or Princeton, or von Neumann machine." In a paper published in 1953, I referred to it as "the electronic computer of the Institute for Advanced Study"—that must have been the officially encouraged name. Goldstine states on pages 220–224 of his book that substantial conflicts arose on the EDVAC project, but, as he says, von Neumann certainly was a leading figure in it and this is no doubt the reason the computer was misidentified as the EDVAC in PHYSICS TODAY's November 1981 issue.

DONALD E. OSTERBROCK

Lick Observatory

Santa Cruz, California

6/82

Mistaken report

It has been pointed out to me by Bogdan Maglich that King Abdelaziz University has no plan for a nuclear-energy center as I mistakenly reported in my letter "Physics in Saudi Arabia" (May, page 11).

MUJADDID A. IJAZ

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

6/82

Blacksburg, Virginia

Corrections

July, page 75—the correct name of the manufacturer of the new plasma-monitoring system described in our New Products is *Balzars*.

July, page 47—the electrode reactions of the hydrogen-air fuel cell are incorrect because of a printing error; they should read

