

forced to sign a statement denying his beliefs and 400 years after Kepler's mother was imprisoned for a year under accusations of being a witch. Indeed one has only to look at the persecution of Einstein (by the German authorities in the 1930s) or Oppenheimer (in the US in the 1950s) or Sakharov in the USSR today to realize that fear of learning may well continue for the rest of human history to be shown by those who seek power over others.

Surely, those who seek both political power and respect will have to find truth, not suppress it. That may be hard, but in the long run human society cannot fail to benefit. Meanwhile, what can anyone do, apart from putting aside the newspaper and deprecating such governments? Very little; but we can always object, and (as suggested in a *Nature* editorial of 18 March 1982) grant-giving bodies and organizers of international conference can perhaps attempt to take into consideration the above matters, for they do hold a certain degree of power.

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7/83

Question of experience

In your article on synchrotron radiation research (June, page 48), the figure caption on page 49 erroneously states that aluminum foil is used to "distribute the heat" during bakeout of the vacuum equipment. As any experienced vacuum scientist will tell you, aluminum foil is used to short out the heating tapes used for the bakeout.

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6/83

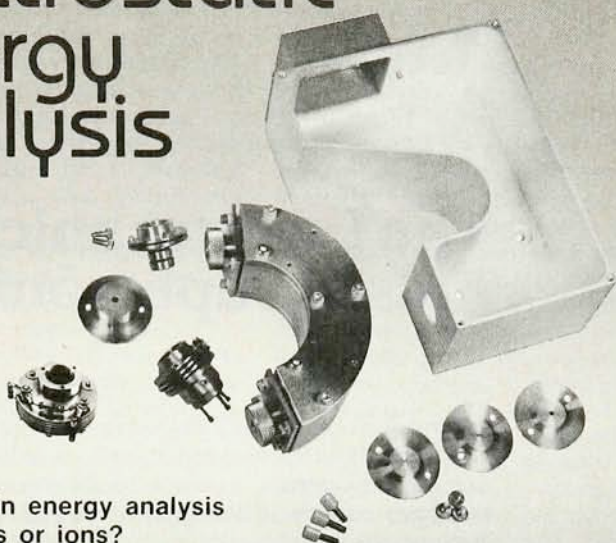
Post-war time capsules

In recent issues there has been an effort underway to mobilize the scientific community against the threat of global nuclear war. I would like to suggest a kind of pessimist's alternative to these proposals. While inherently defeatist in outlook, my suggestion has the advantage of being an almost purely scientific undertaking.

Specifically, I would like to see a project to create a number of space-borne time capsules or libraries. In the event of global catastrophe, these capsules might preserve some useful record of our world culture, science, and so forth.

To begin with, we might rent space on several shuttle flights to place microfilm libraries in Earth orbit. Later deep space probes could carry away certain selected representative works

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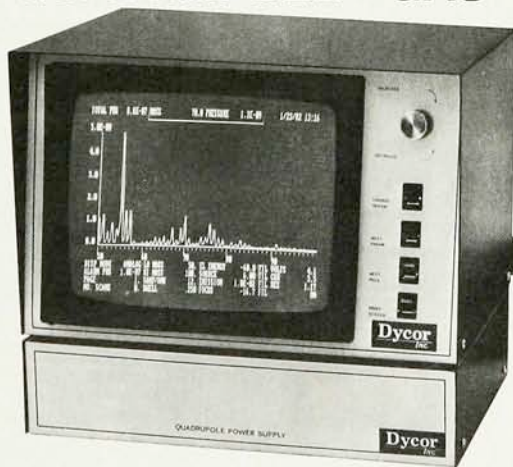
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