

and chemistry to prepare for the University Matriculation Entrance Examinations. These courses are equivalent to freshman and sophomore courses in our universities and colleges. These students have had one year or more of general physics already in form 5. They certainly are not equivalent to high school seniors or 12th graders in the US!

Besides, they are, on the whole, older, averaging 19 or 20 years of age, and more mature than their American counterparts. Their socioeconomic system worships mathematics, chemistry, physics and engineering. Above all, their cultural and family influences are conducive to scientific perseverance and excellence.

There is no doubt that the gap is widening in physics aptitude between US high school seniors and their counterparts in Hong Kong. Our nation is still at risk! The gap, however, is neither as big and hopeless nor as spontaneous and abrupt as the graphs imply.

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7/88

Rangefinder Caption Misses the Mark

In my article "How the Military Responded to the Laser" (October, page 36), the caption for figure 3, a photo of the AN-GVS-5 hand-held rangefinder, was inaccurate. The AN-GVS-5, unlike the tank laser rangefinder discussed in the text, was built not by Hughes, but by RCA, after it was developed by Richard J. Newton and his colleagues at the Army Electronics Command (Fort Monmouth, New Jersey). It was not operational until the 1980s, whereas tank laser rangefinders were fielded in the 1970s. I am grateful to Newton for calling this error to my attention.

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11/88

Bitter Lab, Bitter Memories

I would like to clarify a point made in your news story about the Francis Bitter Magnet Laboratory (July 1988, page 61). Contrary to the impression one gets from your report, former members of the in-house research staff did not leave the lab because we feared competition for external funding. Indeed, all of us possessed Federal research support at the time of our departures and continue to com-

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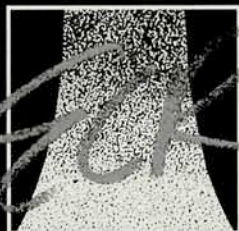


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