

LETTERS

ate degree program in physics. Thus I am delighted to relate on behalf of our physics department that the report of its death is an exaggeration (*pace* Mark Twain).

We look forward to continuing a successful undergraduate degree program, as well as two graduate degree programs, in physics at Portland State University.

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7/91

Magnet Lab: A Near Miss for New Mexico?

The news story "Coming Attraction: NSF Rejects MIT, Picks Florida State for Magnet Lab" (January 1991, page 53) gives some misimpressions. First, the NSF team visited New Mexico State University as well as Florida State University and MIT. Second, those of us close to the process did not find the choice of FSU "shocking" at all and are very supportive of NSF's decision. The NMSU-Sandia National Laboratory team was outstanding and could have met the challenge of regaining the world leadership lost to France, Germany and Japan over the past 30 years. We had a very competitive proposal, one that presented a viable alternative to MIT or FSU and had many of the same characteristics as the Florida State proposal. Furthermore, we are a growing Carnegie Research Category I Minority Institution with aggressive and forward-thinking upper-level and college management of research programs. We just were not selected.

It is probably a shock to many that there are numerous institutions like NMSU that, although not usually considered to be on the list of the top 10 research universities, are highly competitive and have world-class capabilities in engineering and science research.

J. DERALD MORGAN
New Mexico State University
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3/91

A Short Exposure to 'Doc' Edgerton

When I saw the obituary of Harold Edgerton in your April issue (page 126) I was reminded of my sadness upon hearing of his death in January. I met "Doc" Edgerton by chance one day in 1976. I was a freshman physics student at Rutgers, visiting a high school classmate of mine who was

attending MIT. We were wandering the hallway on the way back from her classes, looking at the pictures on the walls. By now almost everyone has seen them: the bursting balloon, the exploding apple, the drop of milk. But they were brand new to us, and we were fascinated.

Suddenly an elderly gentleman charged out of a nearby office, said, "You like those pictures? Come here, I'll show you something," and hustled us into one of the labs. He took us on a whirlwind tour of the place and then installed us at one of the sinks, where green-dyed drops of water could appear to stand still or even flow backward, depending on the speed of flow in relation to the frequency of the adjacent strobe light. He spent a few minutes asking us about what classes we were taking and why we were interested in physics. Then he looked at his watch and ran out of the room, stopping only to say over his shoulder, "Turn off the lights when you're done."

"Who is that guy?" I asked my friend.

"I have no idea," she answered.

"Well, it's nice of him to let us play in his lab."

It wasn't until much later that I heard of the famous Doc Edgerton: Reading an article about the inventor, entrepreneur and, above all, teacher, I suddenly realized that I was reading about someone whom I had been privileged to meet. All who were his students, whether for five years or five minutes, are richer for having known him.

SHERRI CHASIN CALVO
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4/91

Hamamatsu Photonics Lab: Given to Gotham

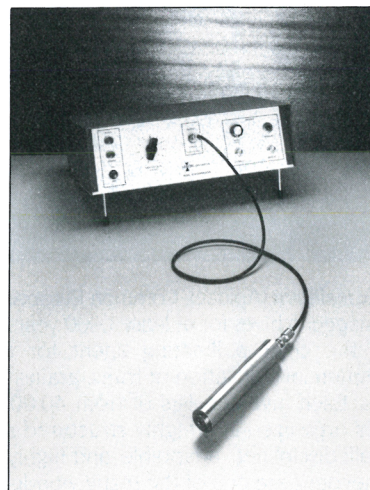
I found the news story entitled "Several Japanese Corporations Establish New Labs in United States" (February 1991, page 81) very interesting and informative.

However, I must point out that it overlooked Hamamatsu Photonics KK, which in 1986 selected the City College of the City University of New York to house and operate the Photonics Application Laboratory—the first such lab in the United States.

The laboratory, which was supported by an initial \$625 000 grant from Hamamatsu, conducts research into the basic nature of light; light scattering in random and turbid media; three-dimensional optical imaging in the time and angular domains; ultra-

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