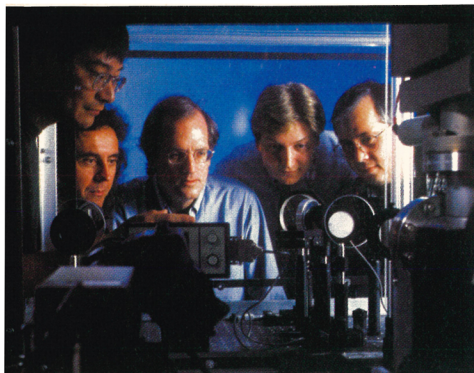




GLENN EDWARDS (center) joins colleagues at the Duke University Free Electron Laser Laboratory.

electron laser. Madey's tenure at Duke proved rocky, with squabbles over lab management and planning, and he was eventually removed as director. He left in late 1997, and is now setting up a free electron laser facility at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. Meanwhile, lawsuits filed against Duke and some individuals regarding patent infringement, age discrimination, and

equipment ownership, among other things, are still pending. Robert Guenther served as the Duke lab's interim director until Edwards came on board.

Edwards holds a bachelor's degree in mathematics and a PhD in physics from the University of Maryland. He moved to Duke from Vanderbilt University, where he had been director of the Free Electron Laser Center. His research is on the vibrational dynamics of biological macromolecules.

The Duke lab has, in addition to the infrared free electron laser (tunable in the range 2–8 μm), one of the world's few ultraviolet free electron lasers (200–700 nm). The UV laser is scheduled to be upgraded later this year with a magnetic undulator designed to produce tunable, coherent, circularly polarized extreme-UV radiation. And this past March, a new facility was opened for experiments in the lab's key research areas: biomedicine, biology, chemistry, surface physics, and nuclear physics (which will use tunable gamma rays produced by Compton backscattering with the UV free electron laser).

TONI FEDER

A Physicist Writes Mysteries about a Physicist Who Solves Mysteries

A good physicist is a lot like a clever detective. And nowhere more so than in the work of physicist-writer Camille Minichino, whose "periodic table" series of mystery novels features a physicist-sleuth and plots rich with scientific intrigue.

The series' down-to-earth heroine is Gloria Lamerino, a recently retired researcher who moves back to her hometown of Revere, Massachusetts, and soon finds herself helping the local police department with murder investigations that involve science. And you'd be surprised how often her services are required. Each new case centers around an element in the periodic table. In the series' third volume, *The Lithium Murder*, released last month by William Morrow, Lamerino is called in after a janitor at a nearby university laboratory is found slain, and questions arise about the lab's secretive lithium battery project. It's giving nothing away to say that Lamerino eventually cracks the case, making full use of her scientist's curiosity and know-how and basic common sense.

As it happens, Minichino shares many of her character's interests and

attributes: Both are PhD physicists who specialized in crystal spectroscopy, both grew up in Revere and cherish their Italian-American roots, both wear funky jewelry and refuse to dye their graying hair. "My friends think we're identical, but there is an important difference," Minichino notes. "Whereas Gloria has dedicated herself to research, with few friends and hobbies, I haven't done my life that way. In writing that character, I got to fulfill my other dream, to be a physics researcher and make a contribution through physics alone."



MINICHINO

Minichino earned her doctorate from Fordham University in 1968 and then taught at Boston's Emmanuel College. In 1975, she moved to Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, where she initially did high-temperature, high-pressure measurements of tungsten, tantalum, and other metals, and later worked on safeguards studies for nuclear power plants. These days, Minichino writes and edits technical reports for the lab, runs a science literacy class for nontechnical staff members, and also teaches physics, history and philosophy of science, and fiction writing at nearby colleges.

What drew Minichino to mystery writing was her long-standing interest in making science accessible to the public. "That's always in the back of my mind, no matter what I'm doing," she says. "I think everyone should know basic science, and so I've aimed my books at a broad audience." Sprinkled throughout her novels are anecdotes about important scientists and readable explanations of superconductivity, toxic waste disposal, and how research is funded and commercialized. "I love it when readers tell me that they learned some science and it was fun," Minichino says.

As much as possible, she draws from real life. The series' second volume, for example, pivots around the controversial sale of the federal government's helium reserve; there's even a quote from the American Physical Society's 1995 statement on the matter: "Some people think that science isn't political, but it is. I want people to understand that science is a human endeavor—it's part of our culture and our history."

She also aims to portray scientists realistically. "This idea that scientists are set apart as almost a separate species is just wrong," Minichino says. Although they all exhibit a certain braininess and occasionally sport lab coats, her scientists display a refreshingly human range of qualities, including arrogance, ambition, charm, lechery, and deceit. Gloria Lamerino may be an avid reader of *PHYSICS TODAY*, but she's also a lover of classical music and cannoli.

With *The Beryllium Murder* due out next spring, Minichino is at work on the next in the series. The closed system of the mystery novel is ideal for applying one's problem solving skills, she notes. "It's a little corner of the universe that's very neat. Everything wraps up at the end, unlike real life and real physics." JEAN KUMAGAI

Tenure Is As Tenure Does

Getting tenure isn't as great as one might expect, and not getting it isn't as grim as one might fear, according to a report published last fall in the *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*.

To investigate how well people predict their own emotional responses, Harvard University psychologist Daniel Gilbert and colleagues used the tenure decision and other events such as getting news of a child's death or being turned down for a coveted job.

On the tenure issue, the researchers canvassed all faculty members in the arts and sciences (except psychology)