

spend millions of dollars to convince the Islamic world that we oppose terrorists and not the peaceful religion of Islam, it is worth spending money to excite the public about science.

Along with religious values, traditions, and sensitivities, one may also teach children in places of worship (churches, synagogues, temples, mosques) about the human body and stars, about magnets and free fall, about the magic of numbers and symmetries. Scientists and teachers could help develop such science units for Sunday schools, where sane and civilizing values are inculcated. Newspapers could publish more frequent columns on aspects of science, present or past, especially in their children's section.

Unless we reach the general public and especially our young people, science can never become integrated with society, and the majority may continue to have distorted views and negative attitudes regarding science.

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Thomas Appelquist and Donald Shapero report on an encouraging undertaking. Most likely readers have been exposed to this type of advice more than once in the past two decades, though probably not in such a well-organized and thought-out fashion. I commend the Physics Survey Overview Committee for its efforts. Yet, because the article's wisdom is addressed to the physics community, I am concerned that it is "preaching to the choir."

I would have welcomed inclusion of a recommendation that scientists initiate a coordinated community relations effort to inform the public of the achievements cited in the article, with future achievements similarly communicated as they are realized. This effort would be underpinned by expressions of appreciation for the community's continuing support. Informed scientists with an aptitude for public speaking would present talks on various topics to key community groups such as Lions Clubs, Rotary Clubs, chamber of commerce organizations, classrooms, and parent-teacher associations. However, without a well-designed and coordinated strategy ("remaining on message"), these talks might contain such a diversity of information as to be confusing, overwhelming, and counterproductive. The undertaking needs a champion for its implementation and

sustenance. The American Physical Society may be the best candidate available to be this champion.

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APPELQUIST REPLIES: I am sympathetic to the concerns that V. Raman and J. Martinez have expressed. However, I first want to take issue with Raman's claim that the recommendations of the National Research Council Physics Overview consisted of "generalities and platitudes." In fact, the report identified six particular areas of great physics potential and made several specific recommendations. For example, our principal recommendation—that the level of federal funding relative to the GDP be returned to that of the early 1980s—is quite specific and based on extensive research and detailed arguments. This recommendation and the arguments that supported it are very much in accord with the current move in Congress to generally increase support for the physical sciences. Our recommendations on physics education focused largely on the undergraduate curriculum, but also stressed that general scientific literacy is crucial.

Both Raman and Martinez discuss scientific literacy and emphasize that much of the burden for it must be borne by the physics community. I strongly agree. The NRC committee has done some work in that area. In June 2001, the committee organized a press conference that was attended by both science and general reporters and, in July 2001, held a small symposium on Capitol Hill for members of Congress and their staff members. During the work on the Physics Overview, several committee members spoke often to both scientific and general audiences throughout the country.

Such outreach work must be an ongoing process. The American Physical Society already plays a leading role in this effort, and has many resources available. University departments, too, should do more to provide scientific outreach in their local areas. The health of the physics enterprise and the well-being of an increasingly technological society depend critically on the understanding and support of science by the general public.

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Clarification on Laser Dye Concentrations

In Physics Update for the February 2002 issue of PHYSICS TODAY (page 9), one item states, "In most dye lasers, the dye concentration cannot go above a millimole/liter without quenching the fluorescence." Subsequently, lasing at a concentration of 9 mmol/L is highlighted as an achievement by the authors.¹ It should be noted that dye concentrations of several mmol/L, sometimes up to 10 mmol/L, have been known for a long time in the field of laser-pumped dye lasers.²

References

1. S. Yokoyama, A. Otomo, S. Mashiko, *Appl. Phys. Lett.* **80**, 7 (2002).
2. See, for example, C. H. Chen, J. L. Fox, F. J. Duarte, J. J. Ehrlich, *Appl. Opt.* **27**, 443 (1988).

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Corrections

August 2000, page 12—In the letter entitled "The Universe in a Glass of Beer," the date for reference 1 should be 1988.

July 2002, page 72—Ilene Busch-Vishniac's current affiliation was misreported. She is dean of the G. W. C. Whiting School of Engineering at the Johns Hopkins University. ■

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