In 1993 the APS celebrated the one-hundredth anniversary of the Physical Review and reflected with justified pride on the success of the journal and its offspring, Physical Review Letters. In the glow of good feeling about our journals and their demonstrable effectiveness in carrying out the Society's objective ("the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of physics") it was tempting to ignore some warning signs of a gathering storm. Reality, however, is catching up with us quickly. In the simplest terms: Our journals are threatened by their success!

A new Task Force on the Growth of APS Journals, chaired by myself, has been asked to examine the causes of the rapid increase in volume of the Physical Review as a function of time, and to recommend how the Society can best deal with the problems brought on by this growth. To assess the growth, the task force is using the Mezhangarcharacter (Mchar) unit which measures the number of characters that fit on the published pages of a journal annually. In the six years between 1987 and 1993, the annual volume of Physical Review grew from 305 to 504 Mchars. This dramatic growth and compounded by inflation, the library subscription price of all the journals together rose in the same period from $2,885 to $7,150, increasing about 15% per year.

Our editorial policy is governed by a 1992 Council statement that prescribes the use of any means other than scientific merit as a criterion for accepting incoming papers, based on the system of refereeing by peers. This policy precludes the imposition of page and time budgets and reaffirms the principles which are responsible for the preeminence of our journals. Once acceptance rates of submitted articles have remained fairly constant and the average length of papers has not much changed, growth in submissions is the engine that drives the system. As the figure shows, annual increases in submissions have been close to ten percent, rising from twelve thousand in 1987 to over eighteen thousand in 1993. Manuscript submissions by authors from outside the United States now exceed domestic submissions by almost 2.1. Europe and the former Soviet Union account for half of the non-U.S. staff, and Japan, China, and the Pacific Rim for a quarter. All geographic areas, except North America, show double-digit growth.

Why is APS worried about the obvious success of its journals, which are held in such high regard everywhere? The reasons are mundane: Although APS journals, at about $12 per Megacharacter, remain significantly cheaper per unit of information, the most other physics journals, library subscriptions show a slow but steady decline, creating a vicious circle of additional price increases and posing a threat to the Society's balance sheet. The editorial operations are experiencing extraordinary strains which, under the present policies, can be alleviated only by expanding staff and facilities. This makes sense if the publications expect to continue to operate at or above their present levels.

The bright prospects and murky uncertainties of electronic publishing loom large over all this. The fraction of papers submitted in TeX is rising every year, and soon electronic submission will be the rule rather than the exception. Electronic distribution is not far behind and is certain to affect the process of the "diffusion of the knowledge of physics" profoundly. The APS must keep faith with the growing number of physicists who regard the Physical Review and Physical Review Letters as the preferred vehicle for communicating their results, but it can do so only if there is a consensus on what indispensable values are added to a research report as it winds its way through the editorial process, from author to referee to reader. The task force is attempting to determine how APS can best serve the publication needs of its constituencies, now and in the next dozen years.

Comments on these difficult questions are invited. Please address them to any of the members of the task force: Henry H. Barshill, University of Wisconsin, Madison (barshill@uwiml.physics.wisc.edu), Wick C. Haxton, University of Washington (haxton@garnow.npl.washington.edu), Bogen Mezhangarcharacter, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (mezhangarcharacter@unc.edu), Chair; T. Maurice Rice, ETH Zurich (t.m.rice@etlz.ch), Barrett H. Ripin, Naval Research Laboratory (ripin@etl.nrl), Jin-Ho Song, Oklahoma State University (carolj@okwok.okstate.edu), Erick J. Weinberg, Columbia University (ewe@phys.columbia.edu).

I am writing in response to the letters which appeared in the June issue, criti-

cizing the Council statement on Colorado's Amendment 2 on both procedural

and substantive grounds.

Let me first address the procedural issues. There was nothing hasty, high-
dramed, or secretive about the Coun-

cil's action, or the POPA and CISP resolutions which initiated it. The is-


tue of any Amendment 2 on Amendment 2 was seen at various meetings with the POPA draft resolu-


tion was passed and transmitted to the Council, and Council in turn consid-


ered the issue in a careful and deliber-


ate fashion. The views expressed by several of the letter writers were alrea-

dy aired within POPA, which, after full

discussion and despite a vigorous mi-


nority opposition, approved the final


draft by a substantial majority, not just a


bare majority. Those who voted for the resolu-


tion within CISP were unanimous. There was again a debate within the Execu-


tive Board and the Executive Board to pass the resolution on for discussion by the full


Council, which finally approved the resolution by a substantial majority (as had the Executive Board in its transmis-


sional action). Given the democratic proc-


ess by which the membership of Council and the APS committees are elected, I see no basis for the ase-


rvers by several of the letter writers that pre-


pared to the Council statement on Amendment 2 represents a minority


imposing its views on the majority. To


the contrary, I believe that the votes taken are representative of opinion


within the Society membership as a whole.


To turn to the substantive issues, the Council action did not, as implied by


Robert Amme, discourage the travel of APS members to Colorado. The article in the March issue made it explicitly


clear that the Council's action referred only to "Society sponsorship of meet-


ings in Colorado" and other regions-implementing legislation with language similar to Amendment 2, not to travel by APS members to Colorado to partici-


mate in activities at local physics organizations. Thus, the Council action is consistent with earlier actions taken by the APS and allied organizations in dealing with human rights abuses in the former Soviet Union and else-


where.


James Felter states in his letter that Amendment 2 "doesn't deprive homo-


sexuals of their civil rights." I disagree. The presence of such laws or rights in the United States is well


protected by our laws, however. The Colorado action creates a body of citizens stigmatized by label and specifically barred the right to be eligible to seek legal redress against discrimination. If implemented, it could have a chilling effect on the participation by homosex-


uals in APS-sponsored activities in Colorado. This is a clear-cut civil rights violation in my view, and I see no sharp


distinction in principle, only shadings of degree, between the restrictions based on sexual orientation mandated by Amendment 2, the old racial segre-


gation laws in the South, and the re-


strictive laws against Jews passed in the 1930s in Nazi Germany.


Admittedly, the Colorado action is not as extreme a case as the latter two examples, and only a minority of APS members may be affected. Per-


haps five to ten percent of our mem-


bership, based on figures in the latest eva-


tion (TheOD), but we would be wise to heed the famous warning sounded by the German pastor Martin Niemoller, "When Hitler attacked the Jews, I was not concerned. And when Hitler at-


tacked the Catholics, I was not a Catho-


l, and therefore, I was not concerned. And when Hitler attacked the unions and the industrialists, I was not a member of the unions and I was not con-


cerned. Then, Hitler attacked me and the Protestant church—and there was nobody left to be concerned." (Con-


In sum, I believe that the APS Council has acted responsibly on this issue, and that the action is fully consistent with the underlying physics mission of the APS. Any matter that affects the human rights of physicists indirectly affects the practice of our profession, and whether in our own "backyard" or abroad, is a proper Society concern.

Beyond this, we must not forget that for many of the groups which champi-


oned Amendment 2, the agenda on homoness is only one of several agendas. Many of the backers of the Colorado action are also campaigning to teach a literal Biblical interpretation of the origin of the Universe and of life as "creation science" in our schools. This directly concerns science, but I think that it would be dangerous for the APS to wait in speaking out until an al-


lego of Amendment 2 are framed which


tack the teaching of the standard model of cosmology or the theory of evolution. The conclusion of history is that when basic liberties are threat-


ened, the time to speak out is sooner rather than later. I remain silent until I believe that my personal interests are threatened is to wait too late.

Stephen Adler

Institute for Advanced Study

Physics Community Should Support Council's Action

I am a second-year graduate student at the University of California at Santa

Barbara. Today I picked up my copy of the June APS NEWS expecting to read

about various goings-on in the physics community. I did not expect to find myself repeatedly to alco-

holics, pedophiles, and practitioners of bestiality and ritual murder. I had al-

ways thought that my life would have a private sphere, and that within the

(continued on page 3)
context of the physics community I would be judged on the merit of my work and not have to contend with attacks on the most intimate aspects of my life. Now, however, I feel I have no choice but to talk openly with the members of my professional community in order to explain why I find the remarks and behavior of some colleagues, like Robert Amme, Anthony Diletano and James Felten, both misguided and offensive, and urge the physics community to join with me in supporting the APS Council's decision not to hold conferences in places where I and others like me are obviously unwelcome.

Diletano asserts in his letter that homosexuality is changeable behavior which cannot be measured or scientifically determined, and therefore cannot be the subject of discrimination. Putting aside for the moment that the American Psychiatric Association concluded in January 1990 that there is no published evidence to support that any therapy can "treat" homosexuality even in those who wish to become heterosexual, Diletano also claims that race and religion are not measurable. Do we then have to conclude that discrimination on the basis of race and religion cannot occur? How naive does he think we are?

Diletano goes on to draw analogies between homosexuality and "human sacrifice," accusing Jews of "sacrificing" their religion. This would be laughable if, as the grandchild of Jews who narrowly escaped the Holocaust, it did not conjure up images in my mind of the blood accusations against my people in Eastern Europe; namely, that the blood of non-Jewish infants was used in Passover seders. Am I to believe that Diletano draws such parallels lightly? To whose peril?

Amme states that as long as homosexuality is not conclusively proven to be of genetic origin, gays and lesbians cannot be considered minority groups. He is more comfortable with the comparison between homosexuality and alcoholism. He says Amme that sexually compulsive behavior is present in the heterosexual community and in the homosexual community, but characterizes neither. To the best of our research, homosexuality is immutable and in no way impairs an individual's ability to function in society. It does not matter one iota whether homosexuality is genetic or not. We define minority groups along such non-genetic lines as religion and disability.

The remark that most alarmed me was Amme's statement that he and other Americans are concerned with the "cost of combating AIDS in the homosexual community." Embedded in this simple statement are several dangerous assumptions. Amme implies that AIDS is a homosexual disease. AIDS does not discriminate. It affects all sexes, races and cultural orientations equally. Gay men (but not lesbians) are at particularly high risk if they engage in unsafe sexual practices, and as such, gay men and lesbians have taken the lead in AIDS education and care inside and outside their communities. AIDS is a quickly growing problem among heterosexuals, particularly among people of color in this country. Amme implies that AIDS patients who happen to be homosexual are not valid members of our national community and should be denied access to health care if the costs are too high. Perhaps he should collaborate with Diletano to decide how to experimentally determine which AIDS patients should be denied medical care since, as Amme puts it, to become homosexual, Diletano also claims that race and religion are not measurable. Do we then have to conclude that discrimination on the basis of race and religion cannot occur? How naive does he think we are?

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