

Secretary General's Report

The Liquids Section of the Condensed Matter Division Election results

The following have been elected as members of the Board: S. Dietrich (Germany), J. Finney (United Kingdom), D. Langevin (France), R. Piazza (Italy), P. Tarazona (Spain), P. Verkerk (Netherlands)

The EPS and the Division would like to express their thanks to the outgoing members: V.E. Golant (Russia), J. Hugill (United Kingdom), M. Liberman (Sweden), M.E. Manso (Portugal), U. Schumacher (Germany)

Plasma Physics Division Election results

The following have been elected as members of the Board: J. Lister (Switzerland), J. Stöckel (Czech Republic), M.C.M. Van de Sanden

(Netherlands), G.M.W. Kroesen (Netherlands), J. Meyer-ter-Vehn (Germany)

The EPS and the Division would like to express their thanks to the outgoing members: V. Degiorgio (Italy), J.P. Hansen (United Kingdom), P.N. Pusey (United Kingdom), L. Reatto (Italy)

High Energy Particle Physics Division Election Results

The following have been elected as members of the Board: K. Hubner (CERN), P. Vilain (Belgium), J. Tuominiemi (Finland)

The EPS and the division would like to express their thanks to the outgoing members: M. Baldo-Ceolin (Italy), C. Berger (Germany), M. Greco (Italy), W. Kummer (Austria), J. Lemonne (Belgium)

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Obituary

Gero Thomas once belittled himself by joking that when first employed by EPS it was only to do the photocopying. He accomplished more than this: he gave 26 years to EPS, most of that time at the helm of the administration. The work often meant maintaining a delicate balance between the different political units of EPS. Helping to keep this equilibrium, guiding others along the same path, keeping projects afloat despite many years of financial uncertainty, and remaining always diplomatic, was something that only he could do. The following text was presented to Gero at his retirement and we reproduce it here as a tribute. (Editor)

However, we were strictly isolated from the outside world. Therefore, the first contacts with the EPS, the first visits of EPS representatives to Lithuania (you among them), the first Individual Ordinary Members in Lithuania (J. Pozela and Z. Rudzikas) and the arrival of Europhysics News, were our gateway to Europe.

During these past years we have enjoyed the permanent care and assistance of the unique personality of the Secretary General of the EPS. You are a man of vision and commitment whose untiring efforts to promote the progress of physics, to widen international cooperation and to strengthen the European physical community are recognized world-wide and will be remembered forever.

Your first name "Gero" means good, fine (geras) in Lithuanian. Indeed, you are a true friend of the Lithuanian physicist. We hope that in the future you will continue to help us integrate into European structures, to become equal with other members of the European physical community.
29 March 1998
Zenonas Rokus Rudzikas, President of the Lithuanian Physical Society

To Gero Thomas This message aims to honour your distinguished and unique personality, specifically recognising your outstanding achievements, your service to physics and your enormous contribution to the modern physics community.

The Lithuanian Physical Society, established on 29 March 1963, has celebrated its 35th anniversary, and is particularly grateful to you for all you have done for us. Presidents of the European Physical Society have changed fairly often, but you were there among the leaders of EPS for decades, always ready to help, to assist, to consult, to advise.

Each of us conceives existence first of all in relation to other people, to one's surroundings. We Lithuanians suffered enormous moral injustice and loss when the name of Lithuania was erased from the map of the world in 1940. For 50 years Lithuania was incorporated into the Soviet Union, but it managed to preserve its identity. Even the foundation of the LPS, at the time the only such society among the 15 republics formally constituting the USSR, illustrates this. There was no Soviet Physical Society at the time.

president's column

The Scientists' Oath

Those of us brought up in the Scout movement will remember our Scout oath: "I promise upon my honour to do my duty to God and the King and to be a brother to every other Scout..." Rather archaic you might say, but the idea was, and surely still is, sound—A frame of reference for one's activities.

That some adult professionals also have an oath is well known: the doctors' Hippocratic Oath is universally acknowledged and it serves to allay many fears that patients might otherwise have.

A number of factors lead me to think that the time is ripe for some really serious thinking to be applied to the concept of a Scientist's Oath. I realise that this is by no means an original idea but it is none the worse for that. The factors include the increasing fragility of the planet to scientific "advances" and the increasing gap between the public and science. Concerning the public, I detect a feeling of alienation, with increasing distrust of scientists by most of the public. Both factors would surely be alleviated if there were some sort of oath.

Of course, critics say, "It will be very difficult, what about work for the defence industries?" But then most of the work that we do is difficult; we do not build elaborate theories of the origin of the universe, or the nature of plasmas, without a lot of effort.

The following is my own suggestion for such an oath. It has two parts. The first part is standard, the second I think is original.

- I will not, knowingly, carry out research which is to the detriment of humanity.
- If, in the event, research to which I have contributed is used, in my view, to the detriment of the human race then I shall work actively to combat its development

It is this continuing responsibility which will, I think, be of such value. Hopefully, the knowledge of such a responsibility by scientists will deter politicians and such like from embarking on unethical activities in the first place; it should also get the public on our side.

I am not so naive as to think adoption of an oath of this sort would solve all our problems, but at least it would be a start. Something will have to be done, that's for sure.

Sir Arnold Wolfendale

Special Notice

This is the last issue of Europhysics News to be published by Springer. The first issue of 2000 will be published by EDP Sciences in Paris, the publishing arm of the French Physical Society. The editors would like to express their thanks to Rainer Poerschke whose efforts have supported the magazine over the last few years.