

Credit where due

I read with great interest "The anonymity of mice and men" (*Spectral lines*, Feb., p. 29). I wholeheartedly feel that we undersell the proper recognition of the design engineer. It has been my experience that when recognition is given it goes to the upper level; to the managers and not to the engineers who did the work. I feel IEEE should start a policy of providing proper recognition in articles that appear in its publications.

A case in point: "Design case history: Singer's electronic sewing machine" (Feb., p. 40); only one individual was mentioned—a manager and vice president. It was a great article, but why not give some credit to the others who I am sure did a great deal of work.

When we criticize others for not giving, and then fail to give credit ourselves, our criticism is a tinkling symbol!

Lee R. Watkins
Littleton, Colo.

I hasten to applaud "The anonymity of mice and men." Aside from your perceptive juxtaposition of topics from the public press, your article places in sharp outline one of our greatest problems of benign neglect.

Of course, we always want to know "Whose Fault Is It?" Well, it is our own fault. Engineers, as a community, do not properly acknowledge the contributions of pioneers, predecessors or colleagues. They rapidly move proper names into lower-case letters in all of their publications lest recognition of contributions be perpetuated. We reference inadequately in texts and articles. Many years ago I had a hard time identifying Hail of "Hail-effect" fame, and a similar experience almost occurred for both Gunn and Josephson. We are too eager to forget the origins of important developments.

But again, we do not get much help from the media because engineers are engineers and they are not eager to discuss technical topics with the layman, who usually has an inadequate vocabulary. We need more patience and a better sense of history.

Hansford W. Farris
College of Engineering
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

I presume your words "...surely NIH pervades the medical profession and the sciences as much as it does engineering (*Spectral lines*, Feb., p. 29), were designed to illustrate two points central to your thesis: (1) that inappropriate use of an acronym can lead to confusion, albeit create an excellent pun, and (2) the proper means by which quiet engineers using soft understatement can retaliate against some of

their more name-conscious colleagues (e.g., the medical profession).

Charles W. Garrett
Alexandria, Va.

The uninitiated should be informed that NIH can be interpreted either "not invented here" or "National Institutes of Health." Reader Garrett points out its ambiguity in the specific context cited. —Ed.

INPO and the utilities

I wish to take the strongest possible exception to a statement in an article titled "INPO: utilities create their own policeman" printed in the March issue of *Spectrum* (p. 55). The statement reads as follows:

"When *Spectrum* checked with the eight utilities evaluated, they readily acknowledged that they had been inspected and showed no reluctance to discuss the matter."

In the case of the Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant, that is, at best, inaccurate, as I have stated to you on at least two occasions. Let me repeat again the content of the inquiry that was made by your staff member, Thomas G. Lombardo:

Mr. Lombardo contacted me by telephone on Jan. 21. He said *Spectrum* planned a story on what the nuclear industry had done in improving its operations since the incident at Three Mile Island. He said he wanted to interview someone knowledgeable about the Donald C. Cook Nuclear Plant to learn about activities there. We discussed the availability of three persons within the AEP organization who could be the most helpful.

Then, he casually asked, almost as if it were a throw-away question, whether we planned to make public the INPO evaluation report of the Cook plant. I asked about his awareness of such an evaluation and he said he had seen the Cook plant's name on a list of plants being evaluated.

I said I was not aware that INPO had sent us a draft report to which we could respond. Since we had not seen it, we could not offer further comment. He thanked me and quickly ended the conversation.

Anyone first reading your story's narrative and my summary of the Lombardo conversation will quickly see the obvious discrepancies. Anyone doing so is free to draw conclusions about motivation.

This has been a saddening experience to us. But, we have learned.

William G. Loftus
AEP Service Corp.
Columbus, Ohio

Mr. Loftus, senior vice president, Public Affairs, for AEP Service Corp., was indeed contacted by *Spectrum* Associate Editor Tom Lombardo. Mr. Lombardo was doing

research for his article, "TMI plus 2," published in the April issue (p. 28). Meanwhile, *Spectrum* Associate Editor Tekia Perry was completing work on a separate article, "INPO: utilities create their own policeman," published in the March issue (p. 58). During the course of her work, Ms. Perry was twice offered the list of eight plants evaluated by INPO up to that time. INPO had promised utilities that this information would not be released without each individual utility's permission.

In the course of checking with each utility on the list, Ms. Perry has already contacted an official (not Mr. Loftus) representing AEP's Donald C. Cook nuclear plant. This spokesman had told Ms. Perry that the utility "probably would" release the INPO report when it was finalized. Thus, when Ms. Perry wrote the sentence referred to by Mr. Loftus, she was accurately describing the fruits of her own research.

As witnessed by Mr. Lombardo's April, 17-page special report on changes in the nuclear industry since the TMI accident, Mr. Lombardo had good reason to be asking Mr. Loftus about AEP's view of the Donald C. Cook evaluation report. It was not to trap him, as he apparently believes, but simply to add to Mr. Lombardo's research on changes in management attitude, a major part of his special report. After Ms. Perry's receiving frank responses from utility spokesmen on the same matter, Mr. Lombardo was not prepared for Mr. Loftus' reluctant reaction. Yet, Mr. Lombardo accepted Mr. Loftus' statement that he did not wish to comment on something that he had not seen.

Considering INPO's avowed policy not to release the names of those utilities evaluated without utility agreement, and since Mr. Loftus could not have known about Ms. Perry's findings, it may not be surprising that he was taken off guard by Mr. Lombardo's question. It may even be understandable that he would conclude that Mr. Lombardo was trying to confirm something not previously confirmed by other sources. What does seem unusual is that Mr. Loftus has widely circulated the letter published above even though the events were explained to him by telephone prior to his writing the letter. And it now seems inarguable that, while one spokesman for the utility had no qualms about acknowledging the existence of the INPO report, a public relations official at the AEP Service Corp. did.

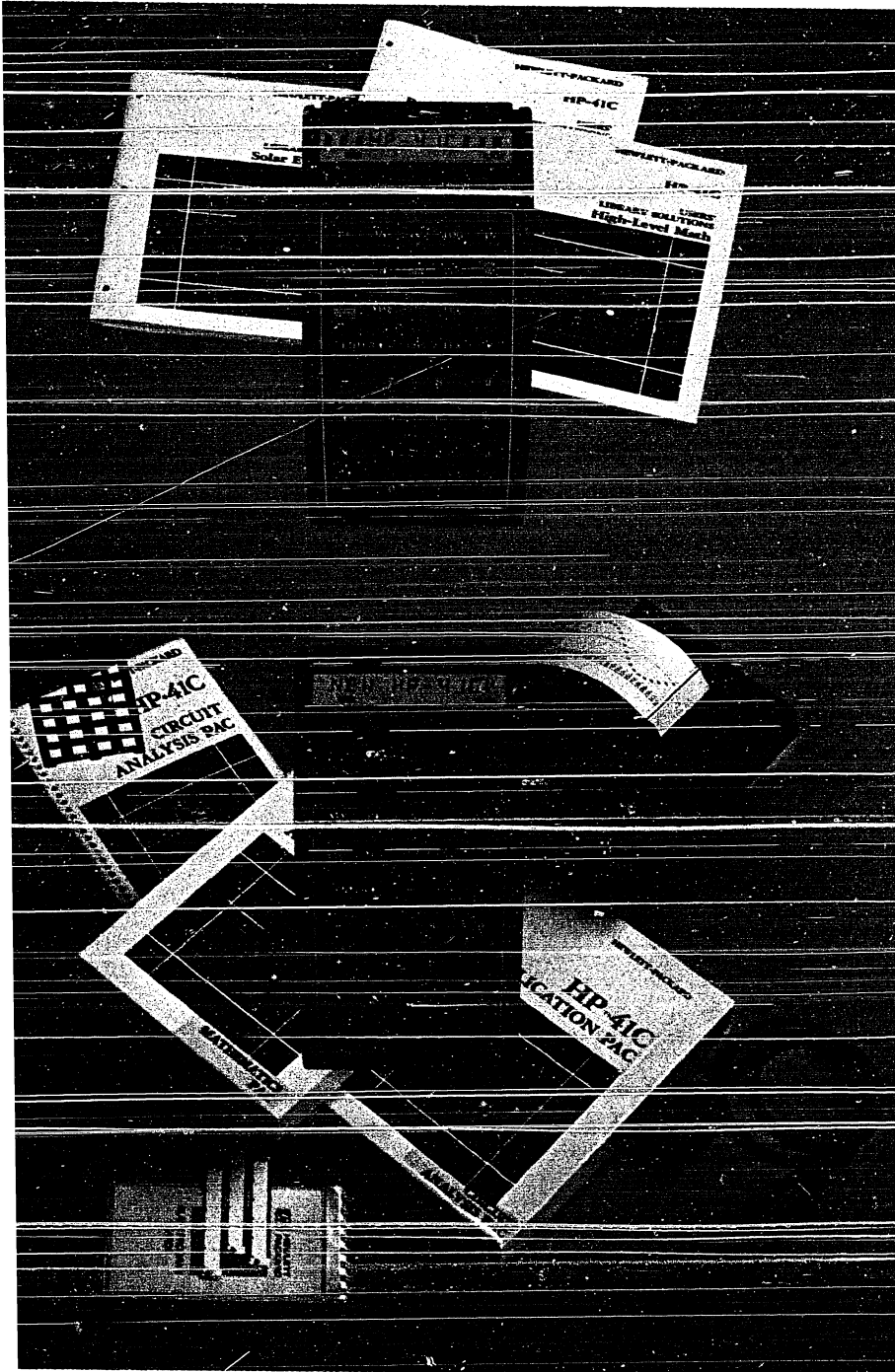
In view of the sensitivity of nuclear power as a public issue, a defensive posture on the part of a nuclear utility's public relations staff may be understandable. However, such a posture may only exacerbate public uneasiness about nuclear power. —Ed.

Small expectations

With reference to The engineer at large (Jan., p. 26) regarding engineers' salaries, I was particularly intrigued by the figures given in Table II which showed the effect of inflation on the average engineer's salary from starting date to 1980. Since I started in 1970 with my present employer, the 10-year experience figures were especially of interest. The data indicated that the average gross salary had increased 173 per cent, while an inflation adjustment revealed a

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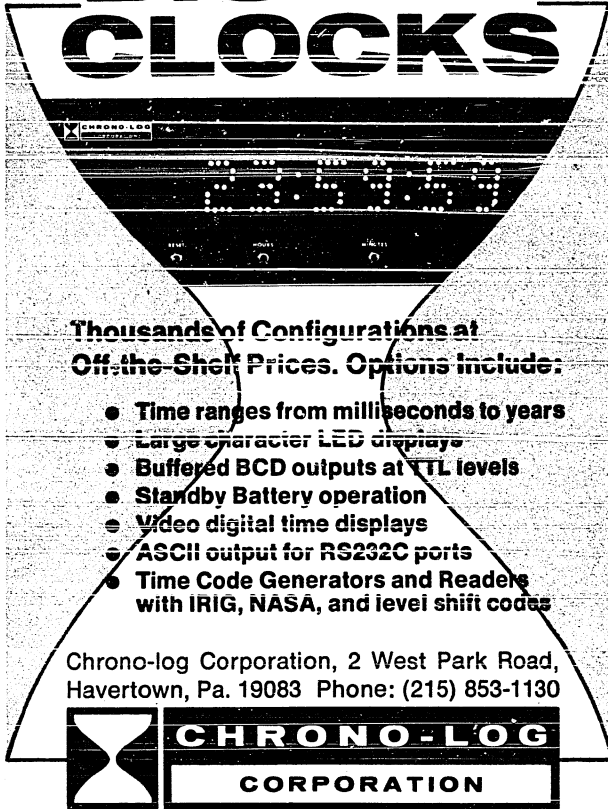
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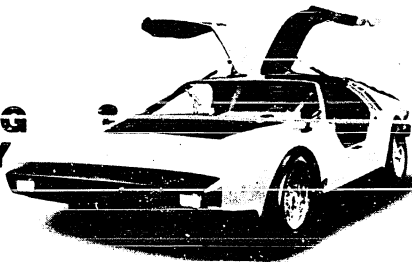
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"true" increase of 28 per cent. Based upon a study I made regarding my own salary history, I would suggest that "Mr. Average" did not fare so well.

To compute the adjusted net curve, I started with the gross figure, subtracted FICA and withholding tax (w-2 figures) and adjusted the net for a 1970 year-end dollar. I obtained cost-of-living indices (which are based on a 1967 dollar) from the local Chamber of Commerce. As is readily apparent, my gross has increased 132 per cent, as compared with the 173 per cent figure given in the Engineering Commission report. Over the same period, my adjusted net has increased only 0.55 per cent as compared to the reported average of 28 per cent.

I would like to offer some refined adjustments to the Commission's report. In 1970, "Mr. Average" paid \$405.60 in FICA deductions. In 1980, he paid \$1587.67, an increase of 291 per cent. Withholding tax for "Mr. Average" would have been approximately \$1425 in 1970. In 1980, withholding tax would have been in the neighborhood of \$5840. Thus, in 1970, "Mr. Average" would have netted \$8669 as compared with \$10 500 gross. In 1980, he would have netted \$21 222 with a gross of \$28 650; therefore, instead of a percentage increase of 173 percent, his paycheck showed something like 145 percent. Adjusted for the increased cost-of-living (based on a 1967 dollar), when "Mr. Average" got to the grocery store, his 1970 check shrunk to \$7454. In 1980, he had \$8571. Thus, instead of a 28 percent increase, "Mr. Average" actually realized an increase of 15 percent.

My own curve shows a significantly lower adjusted net increase because I hired in with my Ph.D. and eight years experience and, thus, I was in the exponential region of the tax curve. It is my suggestion that salary survey studies should present a composite picture, as I believe my study does. Specifically, it shows that munificent salary increases are not as beneficial as they may appear. Salary surveys could better serve the profession by showing the devastating effects of inflation and escalating taxes. Perhaps it would invite employers to provide some form of tax sheltered benefits in lieu of salary increases.

*Richard Johnson
 San Antonio, Texas*

It is interesting to note that the ratio of end-of-career salaries to starting salaries in real dollars are approximately 1.8 to 2 regardless of economic boom or recession, war or peace, or other political factors.

This low level of expectation from a learned profession contributes more to the seasonal shortage (if shortage there is) and to the migration of capable engineers out of the profession than any other factors.

*Michael Benedek
 Bronx, N.Y.*

Geography lesson II

In the April issue (p. 10), Vance Fagan wrote that Barry M. Goldwater Jr. is a Republican of Arizona, not California as indicated in the November 1980 issue, p. 5. Mr. Fagan, however, seems to have overlooked the "Jr." Sen. Barry M. Goldwater is from Arizona; his son, Barry M. Goldwater Jr., is a Representative from California.

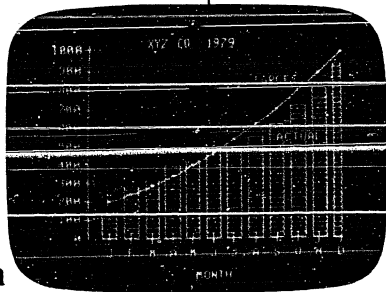
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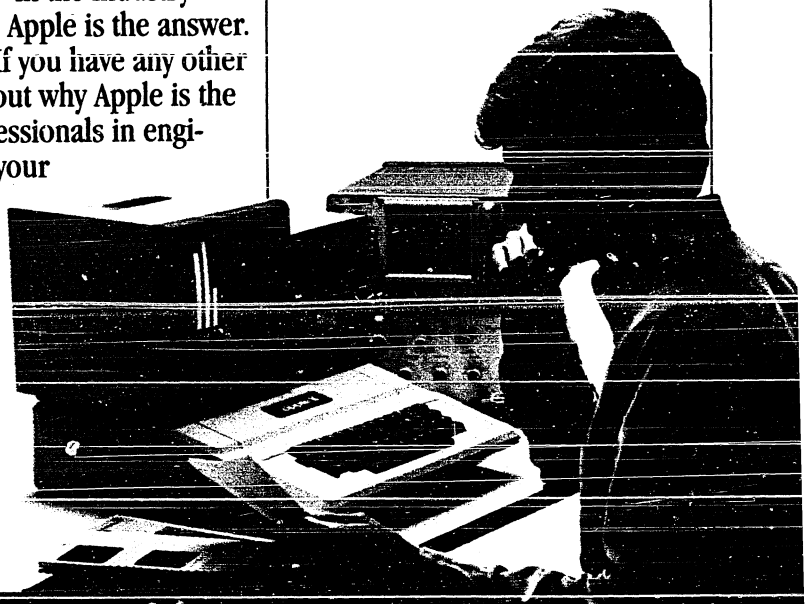
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— Thomas Edison
Inventor

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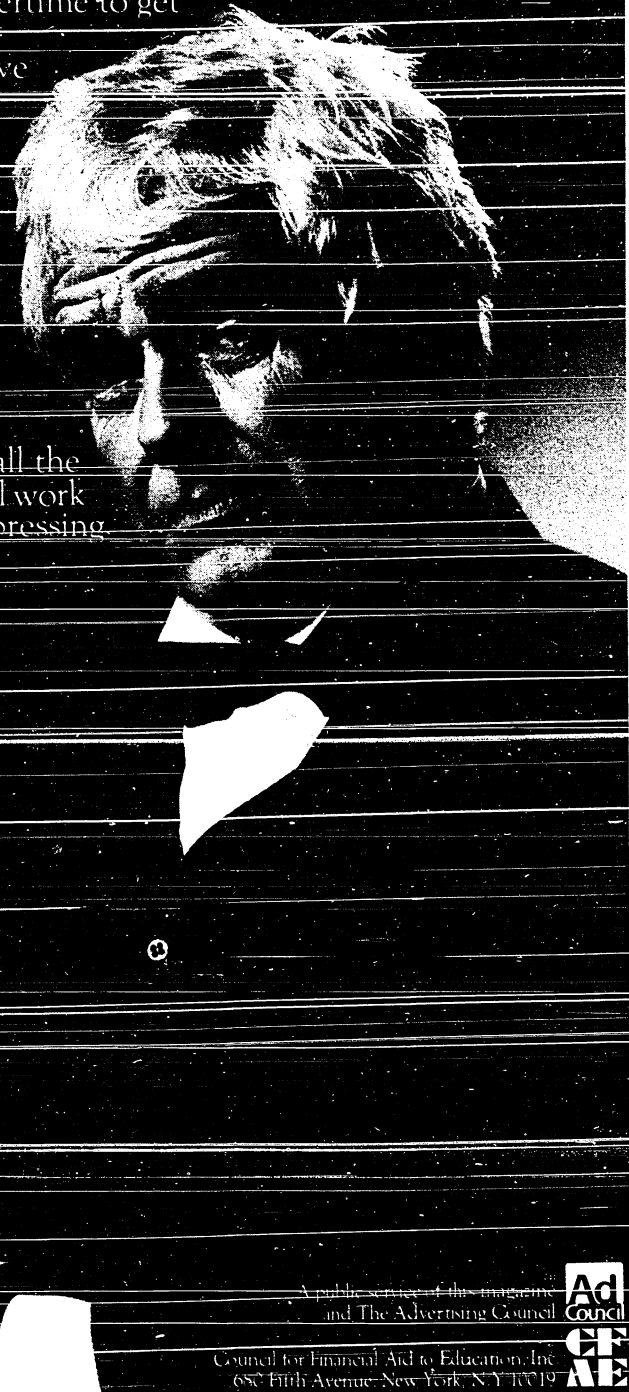
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