

Positions Wanted

Versatile Bulldog/PhD/Multidisciplinary Skills and 12-year record, developing/commercializing composites, and engineering thermoplastics and thermosets for emerging markets—e.g., ESD, EMI, fiber optics. Seek senior technical position and project management responsibilities in dynamic company. Experienced liaison to manufacturing, marketing, customers, US/foreign licensing and ventures. Willing to relocate, travel (25%). **Employers—Please reply to Box XIX, 604.**

PhD seeks research position. 15 years research experience in industry, defense, and educational environment. Expertise in radiation physics of semiconductors, properties of defects both in silicon and in semiconductor devices. Pulsed laser processing for integrated circuit manufacturing. High-energy electron/neutron/gamma processing of semiconductors. Familiar with number of outstanding scientists in all former Soviet areas. **Employers—Please reply to Box XIX, 605.**

Research/Engineer position sought in industry/academia/national lab in development and characterization of materials. Extensive experience with AEA, TEM, SEM, XRD, photoemission, optical properties and electronic structure, ellipsometry, ultrahigh vacuum. Long experience working in university labs, computer modeling of inelastic scattering of electrons using Monte Carlo. PhD in materials science, PhD in physics. U.S. citizen. **Employers—Please reply to Box XIX, 606.**

Materials Scientist (PhD 1991) seeks challenging and continuing research and development position. Experience with solid-state chemical sensors, electroluminescent display devices and photovoltaics. Extensive experience with many thin-film deposition and characterization techniques. Broad educational background in materials science and physical and solid-state chemistry. **Employers—Please reply to Box XIX, 602.**

Physicist, PhD in materials science (electronic materials) seeks industrial/academic research position. Substantial experience with metal/II-VI semiconductor interfaces, phase equilibria, reaction diffusion, thin film deposition of intermetallic phases, DTA, XRD, SEM/EDS, AES and analysis of electrical contact properties. Fluent German and English, basic Spanish. **Employers—Please reply to Box XIX, 603.**

Ad Closing for the August Issue is July 1

To place your ad, call Mary E. Kaufold at (412) 367-3036.

POSTERMINARIES

Of Language and Languages

An acquaintance of mine submitted a paper to a certain journal, regarded by many as the publishing paragon of the physics profession. The paper was accepted but there was one small difficulty. The editor took exception to the figure of speech which he had employed in order to create a simple picture of some otherwise obscure mathematics. He had referred to a "drunkard on a staircase."

At a time when most scientific articles are so soporific that train drivers and pilots should be forbidden even to look at them, why do editors object to language that has a bit of bite to it, or a personal flavour? Perhaps in this case it was considered to be a gratuitous insult to certain unfortunates? "Well," said my friend, "I tried a 'meandering aunt' and the answer from the Word Control Police was still 'no.'" I replied that I'd had a few of those wandering ladies in my own family, and found the analogy charming. No, he insisted, it was a "meandering ant."

Aunts may well be a sensitive social group to be respected at all times, but ants are surely not. Admittedly, if faced by a column of African army ants I would not choose to dispute the matter. How can a reference to a single lost member of the species be unacceptable?

So why then are sinister forces at work to maintain anodyne and anorexic English in our primary journals?

What possible justification could there be? I can think of only one, namely that English is the established *lingua franca* of science and as such it ought to operate on a restricted vocabulary and imagery, in the interests of accessibility.

The days are long past when Robert Boyle apologised at length for writing in his own language or when Maxwell learned Dutch in order to read the dissertation of van der Waals. We live in the age whimsically foreseen by the eccentric genius of electromagnetic theory, Oliver Heaviside, a century ago:

"Though sad, it is a fact that few Britons have any linguistic talent. It is not due to laziness but to a real mental incapacity. In fact one language is quite enough. Foreigners, on the other hand, seem to be gifted linguists, so much so that they have invented a large number of lingos and are commonly skilled in several at once. Very well, I would say let them give us poor islanders the benefit of their skills in doing all their best work into English, and why not make English the international scientific language? It would be all the same to the foreigners and a great boon to Great Britain and Irelanders, and the other English speaking peoples."

And so it came to pass. Does the price

have to be the enforced boredom of a pallid, skeletal version of the language?

There are few signs of any resistance to this tendency. Most of us hardly expect anyone to look at our stuff anyway. The potential readers are too busy extending their own *curricula vitae* with papers that we shall not read either. Our appreciation of the current literature is approximately equivalent to that of a meandering ant in a library.

How depressing. Never mind—you can always write a piece, replete with rich irony and subtle allusion, for the *MRS Bulletin*.

DENIS L. WEAIRE
Professor, Trinity College Dublin
Editor, *Journal of Physics: Condensed Matter*

EDITOR'S NOTE: Predictably, we found it impossible to keep our editorial pens strictly capped and must confess to consistently moving commas and periods inside quotation marks. We also added some quotation marks in the second paragraph, but we changed no words and retained the flavour of the original spelling.

Your words on matters of interest to materials scientists are welcome. Write to: Editor, *MRS Bulletin*, Materials Research Society, 9800 McKnight Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15237-6006. Phone (412) 367-3003; fax (412) 367-4373.