# Letters

## Jury Selection

The "social science" techniques of jury selection described by Deborah Shapley (News and Comment, 20 Sept., p. 1033) were practiced long before the behavioral sciences reached their current prominence.

Shortly after the turn of the century, the nephew of a U.S. senator from South Carolina shot the editor of the state's leading morning newspaper.

In those days, it was not uncommon for citizens of South Carolina to have portraits or photographs of people they admired hanging in their homes (such as Washington, Lincoln, Robert E. Lee, and the like).

Lawyers for the accused identified the veniremen from among whom the jury would be impaneled. They employed persons to pose as salesmen of portraits and photographs to go, door-to-door, to the homes of these individuals. In addition to pictures of Washington, Lincoln, and Lee, a picture of the senator—the uncle of the accused—was included, and comments (positive and negative) about the senator were recorded.

When the case came to trail, the defense lawyers struck from the jury those individuals who did not like the senator and kept those who did. They brought the senator from Washington to sit beside his nephew. The nephew was acquitted.

SAUL LAVISKY
*5601 Seminary Road,*
*Falls Church, Virginia 22041*

## Hydrogen Storage

We would like to call attention to an item in *Physics Today* (*1*, p. 64) concerning work by Zijlstra on hydrogen storage in intermetallic solids. A compound of a rare earth and nickel or cobalt (for example, $LaNi_5$) under certain conditions will form a hydride and at "4 atmospheres the hydrogen has a density that would otherwise require a compression to 1000 atmospheres. . . . If the pressure is lowered below the equilibrium pressure, the hydrogen will be liberated." We recall that Winsche *et al.* (*2*) stated last year that "the key problem in the application of hydrogen as an automotive fuel is storage." These authors predicted that metal hydrides might provide a solution to this storage problem.

Jones (*3*) has discussed the desirability and feasibility of nonpolluting engines using liquid hydrogen as a fuel. A rough calculation shows that the storage method proposed by Zijlstra can produce hydrogen densities approximately one-third that of liquid hydrogen without the attendant problems of storing and maintaining a liquid at 20°K. This process appears to us to make it feasible to store hydrogen produced by electrolysis of water or by other means for use as an energy source.

WALTER H. BRATTAIN
CRAIG J. W. GUNSUL
*Department of Physics,*
*Whitman College,*
*Walla Walla, Washington 99362*

**References**

1. G. B. Lubkin, *Phys. Today* **27**, 61 (June 1974).
2. W. E. Winsche, K. C. Hoffman, F. J. Salzano, *Science* **180**, 1325 (1973).
3. L. W. Jones, *ibid.* **174**, 367 (1971).

## Presidential Science Advising

G. B. Kistiakowsky, in his interesting and informative article "Presidential science advising" (5 Apr., p. 38), misdescribes one aspect of the situation in the Kennedy Administration. He says that "the Assistant for National Security Affairs set up his own staff to deal with arms control matters; the science advisor was less welcome to him in the White House meetings on national security affairs than science advisors had been in Eisenhower years." I was a senior member of the National Security staff during the period described (and for most of it, the deputy special assistant) and was involved deeply in all the arms control problems and in a wide variety of other problems relating to defense and intelligence. At all times I worked closely with Jerome E. Wiesner, the then science advisor. One of Wiesner's staff members, Spurgeon Keeney, in effect divided his time between the Special Assistant for Science and Technology and the Special Assistant for National Security Affairs. It is incorrect to say that the Special Assistant for Science and Technology was in any way excluded from or unwelcome at White House meetings involving arms control, military problems, or military budget problems with a technical component, or to imply that he was in any way barred from making his views heard.

CARL KAYSEN
*Institute for Advanced Study,*
*Princeton, New Jersey 08540*

I disagree with Kistiakowsky's main premise that "leadership of technology-oriented policy innovations needs to be returned to the Executive Branch. . . ."

The executive branches at both the federal and state levels have become exceedingly powerful in recent years. So much so that the balance of powers has been tipped in such a way that legislative branches are often relegated to a weak review role. This is especially true with questions of scientific and technical import which demand specialized expertise. As chief executive officer, the President or the governor enjoys direct and full access to the technical exports employed by the agencies under their management. Advice from one's employees may come with certain empire-building or self-preservation overtones, as Kistiakowsky points out, but at times such values may be in agreement with those of the chief executive. The Atomic Energy Commission's recommendation to President Nixon that he achieve his "Project Independence" by spending more than half of the proposed $10 billion over the next 5 years on nuclear research done by the Atomic Energy Commission is a case in point.

Individual legislators and their meager staffs are ill-equipped to critically evaluate budget requests for highly technical research projects, let alone to prepare bills that would fund alternative programs. Senator Hubert Humphrey (D–Minn.) expressed his frustration over this lack of reliable technical informa-