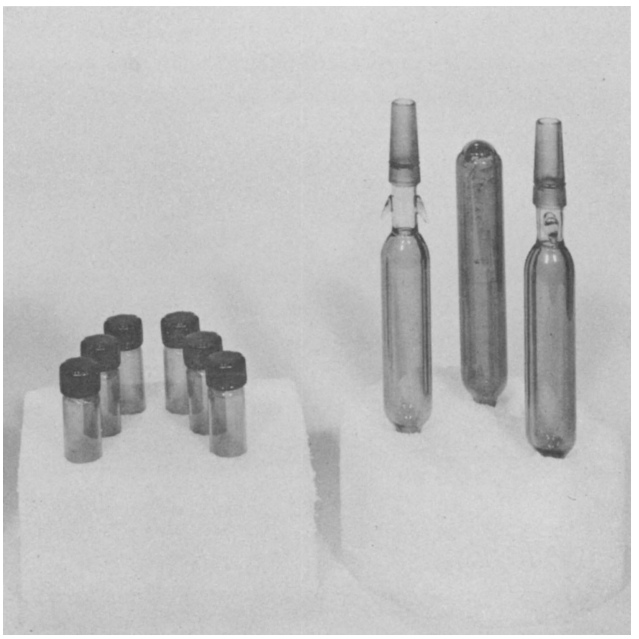
LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POLYSTYRENE SAMPLE HOLDERS

Dear Sir:

In irradiation studies the reproducible positioning of samples to be irradiated is of great importance. The fabrication of metal sample holders or supports to house the varied sample sizes and shapes is costly and time consuming. Moreover, dosimetry measurements must be made for each type of holder.



Use of foamed polystyrene as holders for samples during irradiation.

The use of precast foamed polystyrene for these holders at the Frankford Arsenal Three-kilocurie Co^{60} Irradiator has eliminated these problems. Special sample holders (Fig. 1) of varied shape and design are used in the irradiation cavity. The foamed plastic is low in cost and easily fabricated with a knife, saw, or cork borer.

Fricke chemical-dosimeter measurements show that the plastic (denisty < 0.03 g/cm^3) does not attenuate the radiation to any measurable extent. Moreover, the material can withstand exposure to gamma radiation of $>$ 150 000 rads per hour for many months without deterioration.

Preliminary trials indicate the usefulness of containers of foamed polystyrene for maintaining dry-ice temperatures of samples during irradiation.

Pitman-Dunn Institute for Research *Sigmund Berk*
U. S. Army, Frankford Arsenal *Louis Celli*
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Editor's note: Except for the above, nearly all of the letters received to date either dealt specifically with papers offered for publication or else said in essence, "Congratulations . . . good luck . . . let me know if I can help." This is music to an editor's ears, but printing all of them would make rather uninteresting reading for other people.

Several applauded the name change (*Nuclear Technology* to *Nuclear Applications*) and generously gave us credit for having decided the new was more appropriate than the old.

One said, "Pick up the stuff at the dry cleaners on your way home tonight". (That one was from my secretary.)

However, lest you get the impression that this department is biased and prints only items favorable to the journal, I must record that we did receive one rather uncomplimentary letter from a friend. I'm sorry that he wouldn't give us permission to publish it over his name, so I reproduce it here in its entirety except for the signature:

"It is my opinion that the last thing the world would want to see is another journal of this type."

I sincerely hope that other letter writers in the future will be more explicit in their criticism. If we are not serving a useful function satisfactorily or performing a unique service well, we would like to know what our shortcomings are considered to be. We agree that the last thing this world could use is just "another journal". We want to be more than that.

In addition to letters praising or criticizing the journal, we hope to receive letters commenting on technical points in papers published either in *Nuclear Applications* or even in other journals. Occasionally a letter may constitute a brief announcement of an important discovery to be described more fully in a later issue, or it may comprise a very brief mention of an idea (such as the Berk-Celli letter) which is worth noting but which does not command the elaborate review process used for papers and technical notes. We also hope to receive letters commenting on the nuclear industry, either in general or on some particular aspect of it. This kind may contain opinion with or without fact, whereas papers and technical notes are restricted to facts and well-founded estimates rather than opinions.

All letters should be confined to technical subjects. Thus, letters dealing with affairs of the Society are more appropriately carried in *Nuclear News*.