

Editorial

S Mahadevan, Associate Editor

June and July are the months of interviews for admission to various science programmes in the country and a testing time for the interviewers and the candidates. The following story about the experience of a candidate while attending a physics oral examination is illuminative. He was offered a barometer by the examiner and was asked to determine the height of the building. The examiner obviously had a fixed answer in his mind. Rather piqued by this attitude, the candidate assiduously avoided giving the expected answer and came up with creative solutions. “I will drop it from the top of the building, measure the time taken and calculate the height” was the answer. When pressed to give a better one, he came up with another beauty – “I will tie a string to it and swing it as a pendulum, measure the period and calculate the height”. Still not satisfied, the examiner pushed for the “proper” answer. “I will use it as a meter scale, run it along the side of the building and measure the height”, came the reply. The exasperated examiner finally gave up! This scene is probably repeated many times in different parts of the country. It will be delightful to have a candidate who can give such creative answers! A six year old was asked by the teacher to name the person who stands behind the wickets in a cricket game. “The umpire” was the creative answer, but wrong according to the teacher. Academic curriculum somehow manages to kill the creative spirit in the students. *Resonance* strives to keep this spirit alive.



Email: mahi@mrdg.iisc.ernet.in

This issue of *Resonance* celebrates the birth centenary of one of the most creative scientists and science popularizers, George Gamow. I still remember the thrill of reading about the fascinating world of relativity and cosmology in the well-thumbed pages of ‘*One, two, three...infinity*’, one of Gamow’s all time classics, with his own illustrations. This issue has articles on Gamow’s contribution to physics as well as biology (that is less appreciated). One of Gamow’s own beautifully written articles, ‘Galaxies in Flight’, is

Academic curriculum somehow manages to kill the creative spirit in the students. *Resonance* strives to keep this spirit alive.



High standards of publication require the close interaction between the editorial board, authors and readers of the journal.

reproduced in the Classics section. In addition to being a first rate scientist, Gamow also had a very keen sense of humour. While submitting his seminal paper on cosmology with Ralph Alpher for publication, he added the name of fellow physicist Hans Bethe (with a foot-note *in absentia*) as a coauthor, though Bethe had made no contribution to the work. The list of authors reads Alpher, Bethe, and Gamow! Incidentally, the paper was published on the 1st of April 1948! Several of Gamow's popular science books are detailed in the Book Review section. He raised popular science writing to a fine art. Interestingly, some of his serious colleagues felt that he was wasting his time with these trivial pursuits! I only wish we had more Gamows in our own country who would come forward and write for the uninitiated. This can make learning science an inspired process and help take out some of the drabness of science curriculum in schools and colleges.

It is heartening that *Resonance* gets many contributions from the student community. However, an alarming recent trend is that, in some cases, large sections of the submitted articles are reproduced verbatim from other sources without acknowledgement of any kind. The presence of the Internet makes this task easy and detection difficult and time consuming. This is plagiarism and should be discouraged emphatically. Publication of such articles can only bring discredit to the author and the journal. High standards of publication require the close interaction between the editorial board, authors and readers of the journal. Please write to us with your valuable comments and suggestions for improvement.

