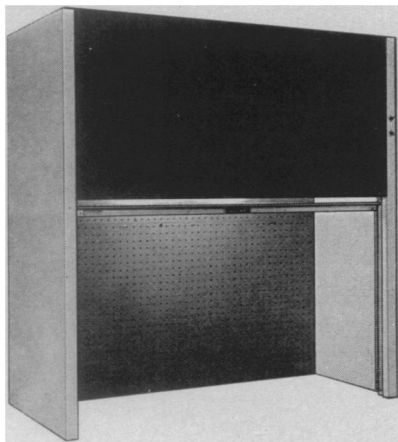


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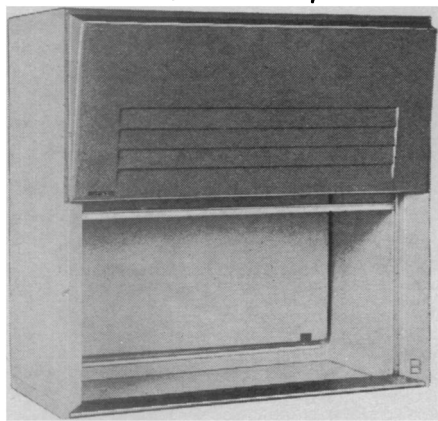
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to the editor

The mothballed PPA

Your wording of Ernest Lawrence's dictum that, "when money is tight you can always get some by talking about curing cancer" (SN: 4/29/72, p. 279), leaves the impression that we were insincere in seeking cancer research funds for the Princeton-Pennsylvania Accelerator. I believe Lawrence was sincere, and I am certain that I am, in believing that there is a good chance of making a worthwhile contribution to the understanding and cure of cancer through the use of high-energy particles, especially heavy ions.

A factual point is that we not only were the first to accelerate an ion as heavy as nitrogen to relativistic energy (7.4 BeV), but are also the only laboratory which has thus far accelerated neon and argon to very high energy (neon to 5.7 BeV, argon to 11.5 BeV).

We have carefully "mothballed" the PPA so that it could be turned on again if funding is obtained. Our main problem will be to bring back the half dozen key people required to run this relatively complex piece of equipment.

Milton White
Department of Physics
Princeton University
Princeton, N.J.

Our article omitted for lack of space a qualifying statement that Lawrence was not being cynical (his mother died of cancer). He always stressed the potential of radiation in cancer therapy but he also had a practical appreciation of the way fear begets money.—Ed.

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