
SCIENCE

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Editorial

GREETINGS FOR THE NEW YEAR from the new staff of *Science*! This, our first issue, comes to you as *Science* enters upon its sixty-fourth consecutive year. For 1946 we are therefore bringing you not a new magazine, but a very old one dedicated to providing you with a weekly cross-section of science in the making.

You will notice that the familiar advertisement on the front cover has disappeared. Cover space will be used henceforth to direct your attention to the more significant and newsworthy features of each issue. This was a step taken by the Editorial Staff and the *Science* Policy Committee only after weighing the consequences as realistically as they could be determined. Four advertisers have held the front cover position for four decades. Their support, week in and week out, has been no small factor in keeping *Science* solvent. Their continuation in other, less favored positions in this and later issues speaks for their devotion to our common cause.

With this issue *Science* also becomes a covered journal—the covers are of somewhat heavier, tougher stock than the text pages—an obvious advantage in the preservation of back numbers. Also, for convenience in handling and in filing, the magazine is trimmed. For the sake of the record an entire page will be regularly devoted to an enlarged Table of Contents which will be found each week in a regular position; we think it is space well spent.

The space occupied by this editorial will hereafter be devoted to an article of three or four thousand words in length, treating some significant, newsworthy development in the larger scientific field, or presenting in an understandable vocabulary an issue, a finding, or a summary in some field significant to us all.

Usually, this longer leading article will be followed by a series of four or more shorter contributions which will many times be addressed to a more restricted audience than can be encompassed in the entire membership of the Association. We have chosen to label this section "Technical Papers," rather than "Special Articles," as it has been called in the past.

Most of the special areas of inquiry have somehow managed to support a medium of publication. *Science* sees one of its more important functions, not in competing with these technical publications but in supplementing them and offering a service to those newly opened fields which border on each other and are usually designated by hyphenated titles.

In "Technical Papers" we shall try to discourage a content and a style which appeal only to the specialist. We shall give high preference

to those papers that give evidence of a cooperative attack on some problem common to several specialties.

The overall editorial policy remains the same as it has been in the past—to try to present in as concise a form as is possible outstanding events of significance to all scientists, with an emphasis on those items that are of current interest. *Science* offers a quick mode of announcing scientific discoveries, appearing, as it does, fifty-two times a year. It does not, and cannot, operate with the speed of nonscientific journals, but compared to the usual scientific media which have publication lags of six to eighteen months, it offers unusually prompt service.

Men of science are not always men of letters! In providing for the editorial supervision of *Science*, the Executive Committee of the Association had in mind a distinct service to the officers of the Association who have manuscripts in preparation for delivery to sections and for subsequent publication. Wisely, the Executive Committee refused to bind the Editor's hands, so that *Science* is not *required* to publish all official addresses. The Executive Committee, the *Science* Policy Committee, the Editorial Staff, and the Editorial Advisers hope that every sectional address will be significant enough, broad enough, cogent enough to be printed in these columns. To that end the Editorial Staff offers its service to prospective authors. It hopes that authors will enter into preliminary correspondence and inform the staff of the title, the treatment, and the preliminary content of these papers. Let us help where we can.

Several new features will be introduced during January. One of them begins today—a section called "Letters to the Editor." The letters will usually be short comments on happenings of interest in the world of science, or the presentation of critical comments on some of our more controversial articles. Here we expect to provide an outlet for news, notes, comments, and controversy which do not warrant longer papers but are too important to be completely overlooked. We invite you to make use of this section.

Another editorial division, which will be used as often as the occasion demands, will be called "Science Legislation." Here we will abstract bills pending in the House or the Senate which bear on any phase of science. In this work, as in all other phases of our operations, we keep in close touch with Dr. Howard A. Meyerhoff, Executive Secretary of the Association, whose contacts on Capitol Hill have resulted in positive advantages to the whole of our Nation's scientific activity. Our readers are asked to keep us informed of pertinent local legislation in their areas.

Another development which will be reflected in future issues is an expanded and more comprehensive Book Review Section. We hope to provide numerous short reviews covering a wide variety of subjects. Here the Editorial Staff needs the cooperation of authors, publishers, and reviewers, if this section is to be an effective part of *Science*. A preliminary inquiry to publishers has already brought an encouraging response. From authors and publishers alike we have definite need of concrete suggestions for responsible reviewers of these publications. In time we would like to build a file of persons in all fields who are competent to review technical books and who will write the reviews promptly. The Editorial Staff invites those who would be willing to prepare reviews in specialized

areas to write to the Editor, naming the fields in which they are competent to review new books. This invitation is especially directed to the younger scientific workers. By taking advantage of it, these people can render a distinct service to all scientists who read these columns.

In conducting the Book Review Section we are working in close collaboration with the Editor of *The Scientific Monthly*, to the end that there shall be no duplication of reviews in the future. We intend to continue the tradition that *The Scientific Monthly* will review the more popular books while *Science* will confine its attention to those of a more technical nature.

In addition to reviewing current books, we have laid plans to conduct a "Scientific Book Register," listing by title all significant new books in science as they appear. To this end the cooperation of the technical book section of the Library of Congress has been secured, as well as that of the publishers of scientific books. In the beginning the Register will appear bi-weekly, and since book production is seasonal, it will not be of the same magnitude in each issue.

Another related service will alternate with the "Scientific Book Register." Industry and laboratory supply houses constantly produce catalogues and brochures which come to the Editorial Office in large numbers. Many of these are indispensable to scientific workers in that they often provide a key to some research problem wholly aside from any objective the production of the catalogue might have had in the first place. We will call this section "Catalogue Corner." Later in the year we will sample the membership of the Association regarding its continuance.

Science does not develop wholly independent of the happenings in the world about it. Wholesale starvation brings an interest in nutrition; invasions of tropical beaches bring widespread interest in tropical hazards to the invader—and incidentally to mankind; a new explosive brings an interest in all forms of energy release; a "dust bowl," a dam, a comet, a Parícutin, bring other consequences in matters of reflection, deliberation, restructured values.

To these ends *Science* can contribute. It is our plan to introduce a series of *Special Issues* bearing on topics of signal importance as determined by the events of the day. No small part of these events are the opportunities afforded by the Association to gather at periodic intervals to hold exchanges of opinion and data, to give and to take. One such occasion is on our near horizon—the meeting in St. Louis—and to it we will devote a *special number* in anticipation and a *special number* in retrospect.

The attitude of the *Science* Policy Committee and the Editorial Staff is wholly experimental. We give you now the first issue of a New Year. It is a compromise containing some items that do not wholly please the Editorial Staff. Later issues will incorporate changes as we try first one experimental variable and then another. *Science* is being produced in the interests of the membership of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, its owners. Write to us! Let us know how you react to the changes you observe week by week.