

Darwin Centennial Celebration

An international Darwin Centennial Celebration marking the centenary of the publication of the *Origin of Species* will be held at the University of Chicago in November 1959. The celebration will open 24 November, the centennial day, and continue through 28 November. It is being sponsored by the University of Chicago with the cooperation of national scientific societies and with financial aid from the National Science Foundation and the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research. Meetings will be held on the university campus.

The celebration will bring together leading scientists to discuss the evolution of life, of man, and of the mind. Centering on problems that cut across disciplinary lines, the discussions will comprise five 3-hour panels open to the public. These will concern the origin and nature of life, the evolution of life, man as a biological organism, the origin and nature of mind, and social and cultural evolution. Each panel will trace the growth of evolutionary knowledge over the past 100 years, forecast trends of research and thought in the next 100 years, and appraise the significance of these developments for mankind. The discussions will be presented by 47 specialists in biological and cultural evolution. The papers and the discussions will be published later.

All members of the AAAS are invited to attend the celebration. Since the response to early invitations was greater than had been expected, the number of those who want to attend may exceed the number of accommodations available. Those wishing further information should write at once to: Conference Director, Darwin Centennial Celebration, University of Chicago, 1126 E. 59th St., Chicago 37, Ill.

Waste Disposal Report

A panel of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council has reported that "certain Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coastal areas can be used as receiving waters for the controlled disposal of packaged, low-level radioactive wastes." Low-level wastes are composed, in the main, of the trash from industrial and academic research laboratories, hospitals, and research institutions that have been licensed by the U.S. Atomic Energy Commission to use small quantities of radioactive materials for scientific re-

search or in the diagnosis and treatment of illness.

In its report, the panel recognized the necessity for spotting such disposal areas at many points along the Atlantic and Gulf coasts in order to provide for the use of low-level radioactive materials at a greater number of locations. After intensive study of local oceanographic conditions, the panel was able to recommend 28 possible disposal sites and to specify the amount of various radioactive isotopes that could be safely dumped at these sites in suitable containers. The 28 recommended sites included every major seaport area—from Boston, Mass., to Corpus Christi, Tex.—where offshore currents and other conditions made waste disposal safe.

The report of the panel, "Radioactive Waste Disposal into Atlantic and Gulf Coastal Waters," is now available as publication No. 655 in a series of scientific and technical reports of the National Academy of Sciences-National Research Council and may be purchased from the printing and publishing office of the organization at a cost of \$1.

Reactor for Teaching

Columbia University's new subcritical atomic reactor has been designed with great operating flexibility so that it will be a versatile teaching aid for training nuclear engineers. Designed by Edward F. Leonard, director of graduate laboratory work for Columbia's new nuclear science and engineering program, the graphite pile is shielded by an array of reversible paraffin slabs that permit rapid change-over of the exponential pile from reflected to unreflected operation.

The pile consists of 270 bars of high-purity, nuclear-grade graphite. Each bar is 4 inches square and 60 inches long. A square notch was cut from one corner of each of 113 of the bars to allow for insertion into the pile of aluminum tubes containing uranium-bearing fuel slugs. Neutrons are fed into the pile from the bottom layer of graphite bars, where a plutonium-beryllium neutron source can be placed in various locations.

Funds for fully implementing Columbia's new nuclear science and engineering program were included in a grant from the Atomic Energy Commission as part of its continuing program to encourage the training of nuclear engineers in the face of an acute shortage of qualified technical personnel.

News Briefs

An agricultural observation team departed 8 July for the Soviet Union under the U.S. Government's scientific and technical exchange agreement with the U.S.S.R. The group is the seventh agricultural team to go to the Soviet Union since the agreement became effective last year, and the first to leave this summer. Its purpose will be to gather technical information regarding biological control of pests. The U.S.-Soviet agreement provides for the visit of a total of nine U.S. agricultural technical groups to the Soviet Union in 1958 and 1959, and for a similar number of teams from Russia to visit the United States in the same period. Six Soviet teams came to this country last summer, and, in exchange, six U.S. groups went to Russia.

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Information on the world's nuclear research reactors, now in use or planned for engineering studies and other atomic investigations, has been published by the United Nations in volume 10 of the 33-volume *Proceedings of the Second U.N. International Conference on the Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy*. The volume on *Research Reactors*, containing 548 pages and 769 illustrations, presents the text of 48 papers submitted to the conference (held in Geneva in September 1958) and a record of the oral discussions at sessions on research and engineering reactors.

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Abstracts of a symposium on "Extramural Science Program of the Federal Government," held at the December 1958 annual meeting of the AAAS, may be obtained from the Washington Academy of Sciences, 1530 P St., NW, Washington 5, D.C.

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A meeting was held on 12 July in the Jacques Loeb Laboratory of the Hopkins Marine Station, Stanford University, in commemoration of the centenary of the birth of the famous general physiologist Jacques Loeb. Speakers included his son, Leonard Loeb of the University of California, A. R. Moore (one of Loeb's students), and L. R. Blinks, director of the Hopkins Marine Station. Letters from Loeb's brother, Leo Loeb of Washington University, and from W. J. V. Osterhout, J. H. Northrop, Hardolph Wasteneys, Moses Kunitz, and other friends and colleagues were read. A collection of Loeb's books and reprints was on exhibit.