

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR
THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Science serves its readers as a forum for the presentation and discussion of important issues related to the advancement of science, including the presentation of minority or conflicting points of view, rather than by publishing only material on which a consensus has been reached. Accordingly, all articles published in *Science*—including editorials, news and comment, and book reviews—are signed and reflect the individual views of the authors and not official points of view adopted by the AAAS or the institutions with which the authors are affiliated.

Editorial Board

| | |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| MELVIN CALVIN | NEAL E. MILLER |
| ERNEST COURANT | PHILIP M. MORSE |
| FARRINGTON DANIELS | COLIN S. PITTENDRIGH |
| JOHN T. EDSALL | KENNETH S. PITZER |
| DAVID R. GODDARD | DEWITT STETTEN, JR. |
| ALEXANDER HOLLAENDER | WILLIAM L. STRAUS, JR. |
| ROBERT JASTROW | EDWARD L. TATUM |
| EDWIN M. LERNER II | JOHN R. WINCKLER |
| WILLARD F. LIBBY | CLARENCE M. ZENER |

Editorial Staff

Editor

PHILIP H. ABELSON

Publisher

DAEL WOLFLE

Business Manager

HANS NUSSBAUM

Managing Editor: ROBERT V. ORMES

Assistant Editors: ELLEN E. MURPHY, JOHN E. RINGLE

Assistant to the Editor: NANCY TEIMOURIAN

News and Comment: DANIEL S. GREENBERG, JOHN WALSH, ELINOR LANGER, MARION ZEIGER, ROSEMARY GALLI

Europe: VICTOR K. MCELHENY, Flat 3, 18 Kensington Court Place, London, W.8, England (Western 5360)

Book Reviews: SARAH S. DEES

Editorial Assistants: ISABELLA BOULDIN, ELEANORE BUTZ, SYLVIA EBERHART, GRAYCE FINGER, NANCY HAMILTON, OLIVER HEATWOLE, ANNE HOLDSWORTH, MARCIA ISAAK, RUTH KINGERLEE, HOWARD NATHENSON, EDGAR RICH

Advertising Staff

Director

EARL J. SCHERAGO

Production Manager

RAYMONDE SALAMA

Sales: New York, N.Y., 11 W. 42 St. (212-PE-6-1858): RICHARD L. CHARLES, ROBERT S. BUGBEE
Scotch Plains, N.J., 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873): C. RICHARD CALLIS

Chicago, Ill., 6 W. Ontario St. (312-DE-7-4973): HERBERT BURKLAND

Los Angeles 45, Calif., 8255 Beverly Blvd. (213-653-9817); WINN NANCE

EDITORIAL CORRESPONDENCE: 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Phone: 202-387-7171. Cable: Advancesci, Washington. Copies of "Instructions for Contributors" can be obtained from the editorial office. ADVERTISING CORRESPONDENCE: Rm. 1740, 11 W. 42 St., New York, N.Y. 10036. Phone: 212-PE 6-1858.

AAAS Space Poll

Polling a cross section of members of AAAS with respect to the space program (*Science*, 24 July) was an interesting experience. At a time when many people are on vacation, the response was more than 56 percent, virtually by return mail. Answers to a question concerning the highest academic degree of the respondent reminded us of the excellent educational background of AAAS members. Nearly half are Ph.D.'s, and another tenth are M.D.'s. *Science* reaches a substantial fraction of the leaders of academic and industrial research—for example, half of the members of the Chemistry and Physics section of the National Academy of Sciences. Thus the poll sampled a cross section of a substantial fraction of the best minds of this nation. The resultant data are important, but what do they mean?

The group, while having reservations, endorses the objective of a manned lunar landing. Only 7 percent thought there should never be a manned lunar landing. The reservations concern the priority of the program, the costs involved, and the benefits to be derived. Only 31 percent thought a high priority should be given to landing a man on the moon by 1970. Indeed, only one-fifth considered a landing by 1970 a reasonable objective. An overwhelming majority felt the present level of support of space activities is too high. Currently about 40 percent of federal research and development funds are devoted to space. A clear majority (61 percent) believed that space should receive one-fifth or less of the R&D budget.

The respondents indicated reservations as to the benefits of exploring the moon. When asked to choose "the most important justification for manned exploration of the moon," a majority chose "scientific." Yet when asked to rank fields in order of their "potentiality for producing important new knowledge," respondents gave lunar exploration a low rating.

The question concerning potentialities of various fields made some respondents unhappy and evoked the most comment. A few felt that the question was unanswerable. Obviously, responses must represent guesses. But these are the kinds of guesses that scientists must continually make. There was a considerable write-in vote for the behavioral sciences. If the questionnaire had included this item as one of the formal choices, it probably would have ranked high.

Some respondents made comments which they signed. Among these was one from a former president of the American Chemical Society. He may have enunciated the view of many when he said:

If we were struggling to maintain a high living standard we could not afford the luxury of space travel, but we have an affluent society and can spare the effort. It is an innocent, harmless project which appeals to the public spirit of adventure. . . . All the money is spent within the country and spurs the economy. It is vastly better to stimulate the economy and arouse the enthusiasm of the public in this way than to have it done by war.

At present scientists go along with the space program but without enthusiasm. There is little doubt that manned space exploration will be carried out, but the program will be subject to continuing re-examination and controversy.—PHILIP H. ABELSON