and it is far from clear that Britain would be willing to pay that much money in the middle of an economic crisis for the pleasure of acting as host to JET. The immediate question, however, is whether there will actually be a JET Project for a host country to accept or refuse, and that appears to be up to the new EC commission which is taking over in Brussels and is expected to take yet another look at JET.—NIGEL HAWKES

Nigel Hawkes will be reporting regularly on science and technology in Europe. He is the science correspondent of The Observer *in London.*

The New York Academy of Sciences: A Bid for Greater Influence

After years of inbred complacency, the traditionally aloof New York Academy of Sciences has launched a major effort to become active in public policy issues and exert influence on the general public and its political leaders.

The new effort is the result of several years of internal debate within the venerable academy, which has heretofore contented itself with catering to the needs of its 26,000 science-oriented members, about one-third of whom come from metropolitan New York, one-third from elsewhere in the United States, and one-third from foreign nations.

The first tangible evidence of the new thrust is the appointment of two individuals to key leadership positions on the academy staff. Sidney Borowitz, 58, an atomic physicist who is now chancellor and executive vice president for academic affairs at New York University, will take over as the academy's full-time executive director on 1 July, filling a post that has been vacant for 2 years. And Robert Ubell, 38, former vice president and editor-in-chief of Plenum Publishing Corp., which specializes in scientific books, has been appointed editor of the academy's magazine, *The Sciences*, replacing the previous editor, Mort La Brecque, who was fired.

The prime movers in pushing the academy toward a more activist role are said to be a handful of scientists on the board of governors, including Philip Siekevitz, professor of cell biology at Rockefeller University, the president in 1976; Herbert Kayden, professor of medicine at New York University School of Medicine, the current president; and Philip Feigelson, professor of biochemistry at Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, the president in 1975.

For most of its recent history the academy, which was founded in 1817, has been known chiefly for its services to members and the scientific community. Its most prestigious undertaking is the sponsorship each year of some 15 or more international scientific conferences whose proceedings are published as the *Annals*. "We get first-rate people at the conferences," says Kayden. "That's really the reputation of the Academy." The academy also has 22 largely autonomous scientific sections that hold monthly meetings to explore current topics in their respective fields. The organization, which is headquartered in a stately townhouse at 2 East 63rd Street in Manhattan, is operating on a budget of $2.6 million this fiscal year, of which about $1.4 million will come from sale of publications, $800,000 from membership dues, $300,000 from grants to support the conferences, and $100,000 from miscellaneous sources.

A Glossier Magazine

The only visible change at the academy so far is a revamping of *The Sciences* that took effect with the November/December issue. The format has been completely redesigned to give the magazine what Ubell, the new editor, calls "a glossy mass circulation look" as opposed to its previous "house organ look." And a roster of distinguished authors has been lined up to contribute articles; previously the magazine was largely written by journalists. Contributors to this first issue in the new format include Sen. Edward M. Kennedy (D–Mass.) on medical research and health care funding; Harvard biologists Jon Beckwith and Larry Miller on "the mask of objective science;" Johns Hopkins sexologist John Money on childhood sex research; and science administration specialist Virginia White on how women can gain scientific independence by winning grants. Louis Lasagna, the Rochester University drug expert, contributed a blast at the media's reporting of drug abuse problems, the first of what will be a regular column reviewing press reports on science and medicine. And Bernard Dixon, editor of Britain's *New Scientist* magazine, contributed the first of his series of columns commenting on European scientific issues. Future contributors will include such luminaries as Barry Commoner, Jonas Salk, Gerald Weissmann, Derek de Solla Price, David Rall, Hans Selye, and Nobel laureates Ragnar Granit and Howard Temin, among others. Some authors get paid, some don't, depending on circumstances.

"We will be publishing articles on the relationship between science and politics, the arts, economics," Ubell wrote in an enthusiastic recent editorial. "There will be reports on new frontiers in research. News from abroad. Book reviews. Museum exhibits. *The Sciences* will be something that doesn't quite exist today, anywhere—a magazine that meets the intellectual needs of the scientific community. A literate, thoughtful, exciting magazine of science in the midst of culture—not isolated from the world." Ubell told *Science* the magazine will seek to be a little bit like the old science section of *Saturday Review*; will carry articles that would appeal to a sophisticated lay audience such as readers of *Harper's*, *Atlantic*, or *The New York Times Magazine*; and will try to be more sophisticated than *Psychology Today* but less technically difficult than *Scientific American*. The magazine will seek to increase its following and stature among scientists while reaching out to a broader lay audience as well. It currently has some 32,000 subscribers (the 26,000 academy members plus 6,000 outside subscribers), but Ubell hopes to double that in a year and a half or so through a vigorous promotion effort. The magazine has been a bimonthly but will come out eight times next year. It will also actively solicit advertising for the first time.

The academy has suffered through several internal management crises over the past decade or so. One executive director "got off on tangents that proved to be a scientific embarrassment and a financial embarrassment as well," according to one officer of the academy. Another executive director was fired when the board of governors lost confidence in the individual. At one low point in relations between the board and an executive director, the academy's bylaws were amended to make the president—an elected officer who serves on a part-time basis for only a year—the "chief executive officer" of the academy, while the full-time executive director was defined as an "operating executive" responsible to the president. That provision is expected to remain in force even after Borowitz, who has more academic and scientific stature than his predecessors, becomes executive director. "He can't do things without checking with the president and the board of governors," says Siekevitz. "We keep a tight rein on the executive director."

The decision to hire Borowitz on a full-time basis was made largely because the governors wanted the academy to graft new ventures on top of its traditional scientific programs. Siekevitz says that, while the academy was "doing quite well" in maintaining its traditional programs with part-time scientific leadership and a full-time administrative head, it clearly needed full-time policy leadership to deal with "the whole new area" of public policy and public education.

Just what the academy—a Johnny-come-lately to the public policy arena—might do now has not yet been determined. Siekevitz speculates that the academy might want to offer advisory services to public officials in New York City and New York State. New York is one of a relatively few states that have governmental science advisory offices, which could prove a fruitful contact point for the academy. Siekevitz suggests the academy may also want to beef up its public education efforts to help avoid such collisions between the public and scientists as occurred when pickets recently demonstrated against allegedly cruel treatment of research animals at the American Museum of Natural History in New York City (see *Science*, 8 October 1976).

"The demonstrators are not a monolithic group," he said. "There are fanatics whom you can't talk to. We know about the viciousness and hate in some of the letters and phone calls. But there's also a huge group of sympathizers who won't go along with the hate and paranoia but who will still say there's something to this. We feel there's a lack of understanding. The public doesn't really understand why scientists do certain experiments and how they set about to solve a problem." The academy has been sponsoring public lectures on scientific topics, but Siekevitz feels these have not reached a significant audience. "Perhaps we can go to radio or TV or films," he says.

Other ideas being tossed around by one of more influential figures in the academy include beefing up the organization's scientific efforts in the public schools (some academy members have already been giving lectures and teaching whole courses to junior high school students in a depressed area); distributing science films that might be used as short fillers in thousands of movie houses across the country; and developing a catalog of technical resources in the New York area that might help attract industry back to the city.

Borowitz, who will begin phasing into his new responsibilities after 1 January preparatory to serving full time on 1 July, told *Science* that he sees three possible new roles for the academy. One is to explore new methods of interpreting science to nonscientists. The second is to determine what role science and technology can play in solving social and economic questions. And the third is to act as an "honest broker" in controversial public issues involving science and technology. Beyond that, Borowitz said, he is "not prepared to go public" with his plans and aspirations.

Borowitz, who earned a B.S. from City College of New York in 1937, and a Ph.D. from New York University in 1948, has published some 30 papers on atomic physics. He has consulted for numerous corporations and government agencies. He has held various posts at NYU from instructor up to chancellor, the number two job on campus. He was a holdover from the previous university administration and continued in office after John Sawhill, former energy czar for the federal government, became the latest president of NYU. Borowitz says he was not asked to leave by Sawhill; but it was the change in administration at NYU that gave the academy's talent scouts the nerve to approach Borowitz and try to entice him away. Although some observers believe Borowitz has a conventional background in academic administration that shows no particular flair for public policy matters, the search committee that interviewed him found him highly qualified and keenly interested in the new directions they had in mind.—PHILIP M. BOFFEY

Briefing

Edelin Conviction Overturned

It has been almost 2 years since Boston obstetrician Kenneth Edelin was convicted of manslaughter in the death of a legally aborted fetus that the prosecution argued had been born alive and subsequently suffocated during the course of the abortion (*Science*, 7 March 1975). The jury's finding that Edelin was guilty stunned his supporters who believed there was no way that 12 men and women, good and true, could have concluded that he behaved "recklessly and wantonly," in the course of the surgical abortion of a young, unmarried woman who, with her mother, had sought and consented to the end of her pregnancy.

Edelin's lawyers, headed by William P. Homans, Jr., promptly filed an appeal. A couple of weeks ago, on 17 December, the strain of waiting for the court to answer ended when the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court overturned the conviction and acquitted Edelin on the grounds that there simply was not evidence to find him guilty. Thus, the controversial case finally has ended. Edelin "had no evil frame of mind, was actuated by no criminal purpose and committed no wanton or reckless acts," the court ruled.

More important to the medical community at large, the Supreme Judicial Court chose to expound on its view of the relationship between physicians and criminal acts. "A large teaching of this case may be that whereas a physician is accountable to the criminal law even when performing professional tasks, any assessment of his responsibility should pay due regard to the unavoidable difficulties and dubieties of many professional judgments," the court wrote.

The age of the fetus in the Edelin abortion case was variously estimated to have been between 20 and 28 weeks—no one was ever able to pin it down to everyone's satisfaction—and much was made at the 6-week trial over the issue of whether the fetus had been "born alive" during the abortion. The prosecution presented, for instance, some sophisticated pathological evidence that the fetus had taken breath. The appeals court decided that, for all practical purposes, that kind of evidence did not fit centrally in a manslaughter trial. It said: "Although the fetus may have been born alive in the very narrow sense of some postnatal gasping of air as revealed by microscopic analysis of preserved lung tissue long after the