Sociobiology Symposium Highlights AAAS Pacific Division Annual Meeting

Among discussions of evolution in the Galapagos, effects of drought on the San Francisco Bay, and the Palau superport, this year's AAAS Pacific Division annual meeting locked horns with one of the most controversial topics of current scientific thought: Sociobiology.

A special 2-day symposium on the issue was one of about 20 sessions featured during the meeting, held 12–16 June on the campus of the San Francisco State University (SFSU). Ten scientific societies and three Pacific Division sections sponsored the meeting's symposia, attended by a total of some 2000 people. They were welcomed by SFSU president Paul Romberg.

The sociobiology symposium was sponsored by NEXA, an SFSU curriculum development program involved in the overlap of sociology and biology, and the Pacific Division's Sociobiology Section, and was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Under discussion was the controversial field of scientific thought that calls heredity a major factor in social behavior. Among the speakers were some familiar names: Nobel Laureate George Wald of Harvard; sociobiology advocate David P. Barash of the University of Washington; Garrett Hardin of the University of California at Santa Barbara; Kenneth Boulding of the Institute of Behavioral Science at Boulder, Colorado; Anita Silvers, the San Francisco State philosophy professor who directed the symposium; and a dozen others. Opinions ranged dramatically. One speaker contended that the human brain is a product of evolutionary factors that control human social behavior, while another called sociobiology a "very crude science," espoused by "surprisingly simpleminded" people. Others denounced sociobiology as an attempt to justify racism and sexism, while the middle ground described sociobiological theory as accepting both hereditary and environmental factors in social behavior.

The symposium was free and open to the public and attracted an audience of 5 AUGUST 1977 about 700. Proceedings of the discussion will be published by NEXA.

Less vociferous but "very significant," according to Pacific Division secretary-treasurer Alan E. Leviton, was the AAAS Division Symposium "Patterns of Evolution in Galapagos Organisms." Coordinated by Robert I. Bowman of SFSU, the session presented new data on the geological history of the archipelago, as well as discussions of the islands' unique life forms. Proceedings of this, and possibly other, symposia of the meeting will be published by the Pacific Division.

A session on the San Francisco Bay, sponsored by the Pacific Section of the American Society of Limnology and Oceanography, focused on drought-induced projects that could alter the bay's characteristics and possibly regenerate pollution that is only recently beginning to be controlled. Circulation of waters, sedimentation, and biological populations of the bay came under scrutiny during the symposium.

Another controversial subject was broached by the Oceanic Society's symposium entitled "Palau and the Superport: The Development of an Ocean Ethic." Plans for construction of a superport for stockpiling and transporting oil at the archipelago were condemned by the islands' high chief, Ibedul Yataka Gibbons. His warning that the superport would disrupt both the environmental and social ecology of the islands was supported by a number of other panelists, including Barbara Heller, deputy undersecretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior, and Ruby Compton, an attorney with the Natural Resources Defense Council.

Other symposia and contributed paper sessions of the annual meeting addressed such topics as sensory aids for the handicapped (sponsored by the Acoustical Society of America); bacterial and viral diseases of plants (American Phytopathological Society); microbiology and technology of wine-making (American Society for Microbiology); plant biochemistry (American Society of Plant Physiologists); terrestrial vegetation of central and northern California (Botanical Society of America); relationships of primitive fishes (Society for the Protection of Old Fishes); wildlife and forest practices (Society of American Foresters); and soil genesis, survey, and land use (Western Society of Soil Science). In addition to the Pacific Division's Sociobiology Section, which cosponsored the sociobiology symposium, the Sections on Social and Economic Sciences and Biological Sciences also held symposia and paper sessions during the meeting.

Administrative business conducted during the meeting included the election of officers, with the following results: President-elect Mildred Mathias of the University of California at Los Angeles assumed the presidency of the Pacific Division, replacing Robert T. Orr of the California Academy of Sciences, who became retiring president; Glenn Lewis

Call for Nominations

Upon completion of the 1977 AAAS elections, the Committee on Nominations will meet to select candidates for the 1978 general election. The committee invites members of the Association to submit nominations, including self-nominations, for the positions of president-elect and members of the Board of Directors for consideration at that meeting.

Two members of the Board are elected each year. A list of current members is given on the contents page of *Science*. Candidates for terms to start on 1 January are listed in the 3 June issue (page 1078).

Nominations should be sent to the Executive Officer, AAAS, 1776 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036, no later than 7 October. Each one must be accompanied by a curriculum vitae of the proposed candidate. of the University of Idaho was chosen president-elect.

Outgoing president Orr delivered an address as part of the meeting's welcoming ceremonies, during which he made a special presentation to Robert C. Miller, who, during the course of a 30-year affiliation with the AAAS Pacific Division, served as Division secretary from 1943 to 1972 and as president during 1973-74.

Physical arrangements for the annual meeting were coordinated by a San Francisco local committee, under the direction of Jack Tomlinson of San Francisco State University. SFSU also donated the services of its public affairs office, under the direction of Don Scoble, which generated a large amount of press interest in the meeting. In addition to widespread coverage in the San Francisco dailies, reports appeared in newspapers and specialty magazines as far away as Tennessee and Baltimore, and the AP and UPI wire services carried stories to a number of publications across the country.

The next meeting of the Pacific Division will be held in June 1978 in Seattle, Washington, with the 1979 meeting planned for the University of Idaho at Moscow.

For further information about the AAAS Pacific Division and its activities, contact Alan E. Leviton, c/o California Academy of Sciences, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, California 94118 (telephone: 415/752-1554 or 415/221-5100).

Multistate Speaking Tour Set for Deaf Scientist

Robert Menchel, a senior physicist for the Xerox Corporation in Penfield, New York, will join the AAAS Project on the Handicapped in Science this fall as a touring lecturer. Deaf since the age of seven, Menchel is one of 29 staffers chosen by Xerox to participate in its annual social leave program. He will use his year of leave to travel to a dozen states, seeking out and speaking to handicapped young people about education and careers in the sciences. The trips will be funded through the AAAS Project, and Xerox will continue to pay Menchel's salary during the leave period.

In talking to handicapped students, their parents, and school counselors, Menchel will be serving as a role model—a living example that handicapped people can make successful careers and get the necessary education for those careers. His goal is to remove the barriers to handicapped youths and adults that

AAAS Activities in Hawaii

AAAS now has a liaison representative in Hawaii. She is Carina Christian, director of the Institutional Development Program at Chaminade College of Honolulu. Her first announcement to the AAAS membership is that plans are underway for a series of symposia on "science and society," and for the establishment of a Center for Science and Society. All AAAS members on their way to or through Hawaii, as well as Hawaii residents who are interested in participating in the program, are invited to contact Dr. Christian at Chaminade College, 3140 Waialae Avenue, Honolulu, Hawaii 96816 (telephone: 808/731-1471, extension 144).

prevent their participation in science. A step toward that goal will involve guiding parents, who often don't know where to turn for help in securing good educations for their handicapped children, to the right resources. One barrier, says Menchel, is the stereotyped image that handicapped people need to be told what they can or cannot do; his contention is that handicapped individuals want a voice in determining what is best for them. His tour itinerary currently includes Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Wisconsin, California, Maryland, Texas, Tennessee, and Georgia. He will spend half of each month traveling and the other half preparing for his next stop. He will prepare



Robert Menchel (left) converses with Leonard G. Zwick, superintendent of the Rochester School for the Deaf.

a final report on the project, to be published next summer by AAAS.

In addition to his responsibilities at Xerox, Menchel teaches a weekly course in science at the Rochester School for the Deaf through Xerox's Science Consultants Programs and, as an adjutant faculty member of the National Technical Institute for the Deaf at the Rochester Institute of Technology, conducts college-level math classes.

Prior to joining the Xerox Corporation, he worked as a physicist for the Avco Corporation of Lowell, Massachusetts, where he planned and developed a nondestructive testing method for determining the moisture content of the Apollo heat shield; and for the U.S. Air Force Cambridge Research Laboratory at Bedford, Massachusetts, where he was responsible for field testing and evaluation of control monitor and semiautomatic telecode transmitters for use in weather stations.

He received the B.S. degree in physics from Clarkson College and has undertaken studies at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the State University at New Paltz, New York, in the fields of optical lasers and photoconducting in polymers.

Science Associations to Convene Desertification Seminar

At the invitation of AAAS, some 50 scientists and observers will assemble in Nairobi, Kenya, 21–25 August for the Science Associations' Seminar on Desertification. The seminar directly precedes a United Nations meeting on the same subject, continuing the AAAS tradition of convening experts immediately in advance of major U.N. conferences. The first such advance meeting was sponsored in 1974 in conjunction with the U.N.'s World Population Conference.

Joining AAAS in sponsoring the Nairobi seminar are the British Association for the Advancement of Science, Association Francaise pour L'Avancement des Sciences, East African Academy, Indian Science Congress, and Interciencia Association.

The seminar will bring together scientists and administrators from a wide range of disciplines, including soil science, climatology, plant ecology, agricultural economics, sociology, range management, anthropology, wildlife management, nutrition, and agronomy.