

Scientific American To Be Published in China

"Kipling was full of hogwash," says Gerard Piel, president and publisher of *Scientific American*. "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet—it's just not true. We are all endowed with a rational process, and we all solve our problems in the same way. Science is a world culture."

Piel should know. During a recent visit to the People's Republic of China he worked out a joint venture with the Chinese for the publication of his popular scientific magazine. It is the first Western periodical to be officially published in China. The new magazine, entitled *Ke Xue* or "exact knowledge," will supplant a rather shabby edition of *Scientific American* that was previously published in China, without Piel's permission and without royalties.

The first issue, due in January, will have a circulation of 25,000. Translated into Chinese from the standard English edition and sold only by subscription, it will cost between \$5 and \$6 a year—substantially less than its counterpart in the United States.

Piel is not taking a loss, however. The publication will carry ads costing \$10,000 a page—making its ad rate of \$400 per 1000 subscribers the highest in the history of magazine publishing. Piel and the Chinese will split the ad revenues down the middle. "Socialist countries don't sell culture," he told *Science*, "they ration it. They put a low price on books, magazines, theater tickets, ballet tickets, music tickets, and so on. You can't make a business proposition out of publishing in China except as we have—by selling advertising." He says that certain "large industrial enterprises" have already shown "considerable lively interest" in buying ads.

Chinese curiosity about *Scientific American* was first stirred back in 1973, when a visiting American scientist mentioned the magazine to Premier Chou En-lai and Chairman Mao Tse-tung. The Chinese leaders asked Chen Ning Yang, a scientist from Stony Brook who won the Nobel Prize for physics in 1957, what China could do to speed up its modernization. "I suggested, among other things, that

they get out a version of *Scientific American*," recalls Yang. The incident apparently had an impact. In 1974, the Chinese started publishing an English-language version. By 1977, it had grown to a circulation of 10,000.

When Piel visited China in July, he already knew about the unauthorized English edition and quickly found out about a Chinese-language edition, without ads, that had started up in January. During a meeting with Deputy Prime Minister Feng Yi, who is in charge of a major modernization program in the area of science and technology, Piel mentioned as much. He also offered to supply the Chinese with the same film that the American magazine is made from, which would vastly improve the appearance of the publication. The film would cost about \$10,000 a year. To offset the foreign exchange problems, Piel suggested that his worldwide sales force could drum up some ads for the Chinese. "They leapt at the idea," he recalls.

The high rate for ads—\$400 per 1000 subscribers compared to the American magazine's \$15.30—is what Piel thinks the market can bear. "Besides," he says, "I figure there are going to be at least ten readers per copy, so it's more like 40 dollars per thousand, which is a pretty reasonable rate for a highly selective audience."

Surgeon General Says Get Healthy, Eat Less Meat

A controversial report on the prevention of disease that was released with little fanfare during the final days of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) Secretary Joseph Califano's administration has given HEW's blessing to the popular preoccupation with health foods. It has also raised the ire of the meat industry.

The surgeon general's report on health promotion and disease prevention, nearly 2 years in the making, links a diet high in fat, sugar, cholesterol, and salt and low in dietary fiber to heart disease, dental caries, high blood pressure, and colon cancer. It calls for Americans to eat "less saturated fat and cholesterol; less salt; less sugar; relatively more complex carbohydrates such as whole grains,

cereals, fruits and vegetables; and relatively more fish, poultry, legumes (for example, peas, beans, and peanuts); and less red meat."

HEW has thus officially joined the controversial camp of physicians who advocate low-fat diets to help prevent heart disease (*Science*, 15 June). This, of course, has shaken up the meat, dairy, and egg associations, which say there is very little evidence that their high-fat, high-cholesterol products can be harmful. "We recognize that the diet-heart theory is now popular," said Lauren Carlson, president of the National Cattlemen's Association (NCA), in a letter of protest to Surgeon General Julius Richmond. "Through constant repetition, theory is being turned into 'fact' in the minds of many. However, a presumably independent agency like HEW should not follow a Gallup-poll approach to science."

Scientific opinion on the role of cholesterol has indeed been sharply divided. "To date," says Basil Rifkind, chief of the lipid metabolism branch of the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, "no study has shown that lowering cholesterol is of benefit in preventing heart disease." And heart institute director Robert Levy says that "all our nutrition information reflects the viewpoint that dietary contributions to heart disease are yet to be established with utmost certainty."

In a foreword to the prevention report, however, Califano said the document represented a medical consensus as important as the 1964 surgeon general's report on smoking—a document "now remembered as a watershed." The prevention report also recommends that Americans quit smoking, engage in moderate exercise, obey speed limits, and use seat belts. Health food advocates have hailed the nutrition part of the report as a milestone. Michael Jacobson, director of the Washington-based Center for Science in the Public Interest, calls it "the most important statement on nutrition policy made by the United States Government."

Despite the importance attached to the report by some, it was released with no news conference, no media briefing or background papers, no news releases, no personal appearances by the secretary or surgeon general. There was only the delivery of the report on prevention and Cali-

fano's written statement to the news media.

Jacobson says the lack of fanfare was due to the chaos that apparently reigned at HEW during Califano's closing days. Others contend that the controversial nature of the report made a low-key delivery more appropriate.

The report notes, for instance, that iron is the most common nutrient deficiency in America. The meat industry is quick to point out, however, that the report failed to mention that red meat is the "best source of biologically active iron." Says Carlson: "Blanket recommendations that red meat consumption be reduced are not without risk to millions of Americans."

Pop Nutrition Books Face Legal Hurdles

Hard times may be on the horizon for the publishers of self-help books that dispense medical advice off grocery-store shelves. A couple in Pompano Beach, Florida, is suing the estate of the late nutritionist Adelle Davis and her publisher, Signet Books, over the death of their 2-month-old son. If they win, legal experts say that fewer "health" books will probably be published.

In her book, *Let's Have Healthy Children*, Davis advised that infants suffering from colic should be given large doses of potassium. She cited a study of 653 sick infants in which a treatment of 3000 milligrams of potassium chloride was successfully used to correct the condition. Susan Pitzer of Pompano Beach says she followed Davis's advice. In April 1978, she gave her son 2500 mg of potassium chloride one day and 500 mg the next. After the second dose, the infant had cardiac arrhythmia and was rushed to a local hospital. Four days later he died.

The Pitzers' attorney, Peter A. Portley, told *Science* that Davis was negligent for not including a warning with her advice—that potassium should not be prescribed for dehydrated patients. "Without that caution," says Portley, "she was in effect giving lethal advice."

The suit seeks more than \$1 million in damages and claims that Signet

was grossly negligent for not including a warning and verifying advice in the book. Portley says he hopes to pressure publishers of self-help books into editing more carefully. A trial date has not yet been set. An attorney for Signet says that Davis stated in the beginning of *Let's Have Healthy Children* that she didn't expect her ideas to take the place of a visit to a physician. He also says that a "medical expert" reviewed the manuscript before it was first printed in 1951, and that it was "updated" in 1959 and 1972. Signet also recalled the book last spring so doctors could again revise it.

The Pitzer lawsuit is not the first filed against Davis, who died of bone cancer in 1974. Portley says that in 1976 a Maine woman followed the advice in *Let's Have Healthy Children* and gave massive amounts of vitamin A to her infant. The child is now stunted. She recently won an out-of-court settlement from Davis's estate for \$150,000.

Dollar-a-Gallon Gas Fuels Metric Conversion

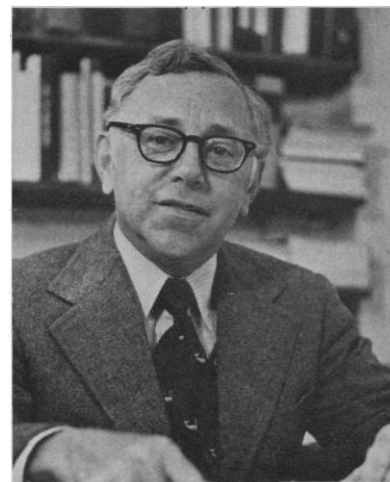
A glance at a gasoline pump shows that most pumps are equipped to record prices up to 99.9 cents per gallon. At the end of August, however, it was reported that the average price of gas in the United States for the first time crept over the \$1-a-gallon mark. The upshot is that many dealers are charging by the half-gallon, and then doubling the price shown on the dial. This, however, is not going down well with the federal weights and measures people.

One solution is for dealers to pay \$200 per pump and have an extra digit put on the price meter. But officials at the U.S. Metric Board say they have a better idea. For only \$50, a pump can be converted to measure out liters. In California, more than 50 service stations have already done so, and oil companies are running public-acceptance trials of the liter method in various parts of the country. Bill DeReuter of the U.S. Metric Board says that if all gas pumps in the United States were converted to metric instead of having an extra digit added, it would save the oil industry more than \$100 million.

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precisely what they have to offer, as they don't routinely publish it." Both agreed that the law would force ETS to organize its data more carefully and publish a catalog for outside experts. It also would force ETS to release the raw scores of students, which it does not do now even on request. Raw scores are necessary to



Robert J. Solomon

verify the scaled scores that ETS does release, and to examine the computations for equating one test to another administered at a different time. "It is just our professional judgment not to let them out," says Kimmel. "It's not a cover-up; they would generate more confusion than they would clear up."

If pushed an inch, of course, most supporters of the testing legislation will freely admit to believing that a cover-up does exist. In the nature of all conspiracy theories, the sparseness of the evidence becomes an argument that suppression exists. ETS points out that an associate of consumer advocate Ralph Nader has been researching problems at ETS for 5 years, and reportedly intends to publish a book; as yet, however, no report has been issued, no scandal unearthed. Nader's people, on the other hand, suggest that with access to crucial data, horror stories would flow. An internal ETS report on cultural bias is an example of one such exhibit withheld; it is said to have found bias alive and well in ETS questions. ETS acknowledges that the report exists but says it is somewhat flawed and that a "complete extant copy" cannot be located at present. An ETS official agreed it would be useful to get the report out, dispelling incorrect assumptions about it; and suggested that *Science* could see a copy as soon as one is located.

Lacking this report, the supporters of legislation instead cite outside research