

Building Knowledge and Understanding: Enduring Assets of Society

We live in a transitional time when becoming far over-shadows being and in which the tangible assets of our planet are being rapidly depleted or fouled or rendered inhospitable—a time in which our own purposes have become confused, turned inward, and often mired in apathy. Such doom-saying has been a recurrent theme in human affairs and has often presaged the anointing of a false savior on whom we have unloaded our burdens and concerns, for the small price of abandoning our rights and freedoms. The situation, often repeated, is still real today; the solution, however traditional, is unnecessary.

We have as a society the intangible assets which four centuries of scientific inquiry has given us, the assets of knowledge about the world we live in and about ourselves, assets which increase rather than become depleted with continued inquiry. As a consequence of this knowledge, we have also gained an ability to understand our place in the world and our relationships with each other. However, to continue this progress we must have the resolve to continue to build our knowledge in the face of our traditional taboos, and to use our understanding to help ourselves and each other.

The theme of the forthcoming AAAS Annual Meeting in Washington deals with these enduring if intangible assets, and the Program for the Meeting itself tells much about the state of our knowledge, the state of our predicament, and the nature of our current failure to insure that our scientific knowledge and understanding are truly the legacy of all members of society and not just an elite few, so that all may share in the decisions to be made and none may abandon unknowingly their rights and freedoms.

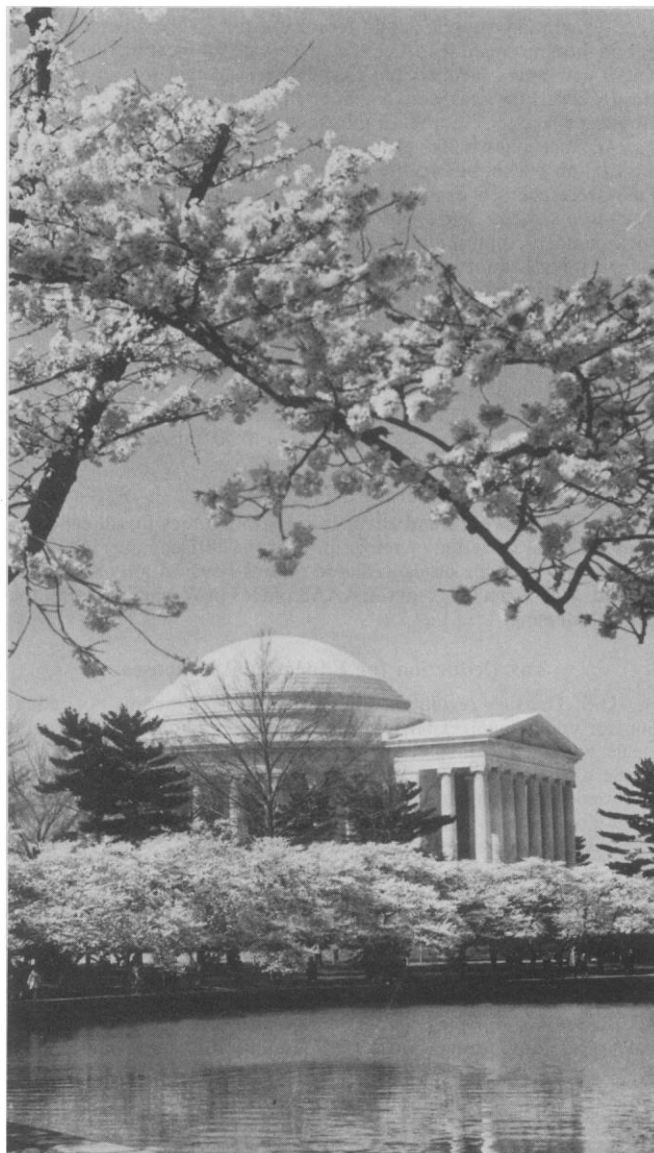
On the next several pages are listed the 155 accepted symposia for the Washington Meeting—symposia on the state of our knowledge in the physical, biological, and social sciences; symposia on our efforts to understand and cope with our depleting resources, worsening environment, and failure to communicate with each other; and symposia on those issues of public policy which require decisions from an informed citizenry. The Meeting will also feature nine distinguished Public Lecturers who will address many of these same issues, a Film Festival featuring the best science films made

during the past year, an Exhibit of the latest in scientific instrumentation and publications, and tours of the scientific highlights of the greater Washington area. All this plus the many amenities being arranged by the Washington Advisory Committee under the able chairmanship of Richard Berendzen (President of The American University) and Joseph Charyk (President and Chief Executive Officer of the COMSAT Corporation).

Do not miss this annual opportunity to build your own knowledge and understanding. Come to your Annual Meeting in January; make your reservations early and assure your place at this most important of scientific gatherings.

—ARTHUR HERSCHMAN

The Jefferson Memorial. [National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior]



Annual Meeting
Washington
3-8 January 1982

For further details and for housing and registration forms, see the following pages in this issue. Please remember that the Annual Meeting begins 2 days after the New Year's holiday. **Make your travel arrangements now** to avoid the holiday rush.