

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE





AAAS announces the National Forum for School Science

10-11 October 1985

Forum '85, **Science Teaching**, is designed to meet the challenge of improving the quality of science instruction in our nation's schools. The participants in Forum '85 will develop a plan of action to restructure science teaching to meet the increasing demands of our technological society.

What are the topics?

Setting and Maintaining
 Standards of Quality for Science
 Teachers

Changing the Social, Economic, and Professional Environment of Teaching

•What Rational Policy Is Possible?

Who should attend?

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Who are the speakers?

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Donald N. Langenberg, University of Illinois at Chicago

•Edward Harvey, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education

Patricia A. Graham, Harvard Graduate School of Education

Newt Gingrich (R-GA), Member of Congress

•Other speakers to be announced.

To register, please use the form on the following page.

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American Association for the Advancement of Science

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Volume 229, No. 4712

Ν



	This Week in Science	427
LETTERS	Uranium Enrichment: M. Steinberg; Morphological Correlations: C. T. Nuzum; A Glimpse of the Future?: A. S. Bechhoefer	428
EDITORIAL	Addons and Catchons	429
ARTICLES	Dispersal Pathways for Particle-Associated Pollutants: R. A. Young, D. J. P. Swift, T. L. Clarke, G. R. Harvey, P. R. Betzer	431
	Wallace H. Carothers and Fundamental Research at Du Pont: J. K. Smith and D. A. Hounshell	436
	Mainbelt Asteroids: Dual-Polarization Radar Observations: S. J. Ostro, D. B. Campbell, I. I. Shapiro	442
EWS AND COMMENT	HHS Halts Animal Experiment	447
	Low-Level Waste Deadline Looms	448
	Briefing: Wildlife Group Files Suit on Wilderness Access; U.S. Meat Inspection Needs Modernization; OECD Warns of Technological Nationalism; Committee Hits DOE on Project Write-offs	450
	Panel Says Warheads Are Too Costly	452
RESEARCH NEWS	X-ray Drought Ending at Brookhaven's NSLS	453

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AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

	Antibodies Made to Order	455
BOOK REVIEWS	Engineers and Electrons and The Making of a Profession, reviewed by D. K. Allison; Science and Scientific Researchers in Modern Society and An Introduction to Science Studies, P. T. Durbin; Perspectives in Theoretical Stereochemistry, J. Brocas; Electron-Molecule Collisions, D. W. Norcross; Reprints of Books Previously Reviewed; Books Received	457
REPORTS	Molecular Resolution Electron Micrographs of Monolamellar Paraffin Crystals: F. Zemlin, E. Reuber, E. Beckmann, E. Zeitler, D. L. Dorset	461
	Aluminum Mobilization in an Acidic Headwater Stream: Temporal Variation and Mineral Dissolution Disequilibria: R. P. Hooper and C. A. Shoemaker	463
	Smoke Production from Multiple Nuclear Explosions in Nonurban Areas: R. D. Small and B. W. Bush	465
	Neurovisceral and Skeletal G _{M1} -Gangliosidosis in Dogs with β-Galactosidase Deficiency: J. Alroy et al.	470
	Trans-4-Hydroxy-2-Hexenal: A Reactive Metabolite from the Macrocyclic Pyrrolizidine Alkaloid Senecionine: H. J. Segall, D. W. Wilson, J. L. Dallas, W. F. Haddon	472
	Protein-Specific Helper T-Lymphocyte Formation Initiated by Dendritic Cells: K. Inaba and R. M. Steinman	475
	Uromodulin: A Unique 85-Kilodalton Immunosuppressive Glycoprotein Isolated from Urine of Pregnant Women: A. V. Muchmore and J. M. Decker	479
	Cis- and Trans-Acting Transcriptional Regulation of Visna Virus: J. L. Hess, J. E. Clements, O. Narayan	482
	Technical Comments: Carbyne Forms of Carbon: Evidence for Their Existence: A. G. Whittaker; P. P. K. Smith and P. R. Buseck; Graft Compatibility and Clonal Identity in Invertebrates: R. K. Grosberg, W. R. Rice, S. R. Palumbi; J. Neigel	485

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MEDICAL SCIENCES (N) Alfred P. Fishman Jonathan E. Rhoads		AGRICULTURE (Roy G. Creech Ralph J. McCreck	D) (1. 1997) 80 (1. 1997)	INDUSTRIAL SCIENCE (P) Robert H. Pry Robert L. Stern	ceae), commonly called the family, which is now distrib
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The American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1874. Its objects are to further the work of scientilats, to facilitate cooperation among them, to foster scientific freedom and responsibility, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress. Flowering and fruiting stages of Senecio vulgaris L. (common groundsel). It is a member of the Compositae (Asteraceae), commonly called the sunflower family, which is now distributed worldwide. These plants contain macrocyclic pyrrolizidine alkaloids which, when consumed, are known hepatotoxins to both humans and livestock. Trans-4hydroxy-2-hexenal, a metabolite recently isolated from the macrocyclic pyrrolizidine alkaloid senecionine appears to play an important role in the hepatotoxicity. See page 472. [A. Mariassy, in collaboration with H. J. Segall, Veterinary Pathology and Veterinary Pharmacology and Toxicology, University of California, Davis 95616]

Announcing a new book from Science

Neuroscience

This volume consists of 27 papers from *Science* representing the work of 84 researchers at private and federal laboratories, hospitals, universities, and medical schools in six countries. The book presents discoveries made during the recent burgeoning in neuroscience research in areas ranging from genetic engineering to clinical therapy. Within its four sections — neuroplasticity, molecular biology, synaptic transmission, and behavior — the volume provides an integrative treatment of brain anatomy, physiology, and chemistry as it addresses fundamental questions concerning nervous system functioning. The volume is fully indexed and available in both hard and soft copies.

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The bight of the Big Apple

The wastes of 20 million people-sewage, dredge materials, construction debris, acids, and oil-are dumped or spilled into the New York Bight, the bay formed where the Atlantic coastline bends inward and New York and New Jersey meet (page 431). Pollutants become intimately associated with sediment particles and are transported and dispersed by natural circulation processes. Young et al. found that particles typically remain suspended in the bight for days, are thoroughly mixed, and move slowly southward or settle until the next tide, storm, or current resuspends them. By following dispersal of an organic compound made exclusively in the mammalian gut, they found that sewage is greatly diluted within and outside the bight. Currents, waves, storms, and winds may widely disperse other pollutants in a similar way.

Crystals undamaged by electron microscopy

A technique that causes no discernible damage to organic crystals has been developed for studying crystal structure in exquisite detail (page 461). Zemlin *et al.* analyzed thin microcrystals of the hydrocarbon paraffin that had been cooled in liquid helium to help stabilize the specimen against radiation damage. A low dose of electrons in the beam of a cryoelectron microscope resolved the specimen to 0.25 nanometers. Fast photographic film recorded the structure in electron micrographs. Both the regular crystal structure and crystal lattice defects were defined. It is now feasible to study other biological materials and linear polymers previously thought not to be analyzable at this resolution because of their extreme sensitivity to radiation.

Aluminum in streams

Aluminum is an important buffer in dilute acidic water but, when present in high concentrations, it can be toxic to fish (page 463). In an idealized system, an equilibrium exists between mineral and water-soluble forms of aluminum; in natural waters, there is evidence for disequilibrium. Hooper and Shoemaker studied aluminum concentrations in a New Hampshire stream during 5 months when two snowmelts and two storms occurred. Whenever acid water entered the stream, the pH dropped and the aluminum concentration rose. Melting snow transported aluminum from the soil into the stream: more was mobilized in the first thaw than in subsequent thaws, perhaps because continued leaching depleted the soil's aluminum stores. Fast water carried dissolved aluminum downstream before conversion to the mineral form could occur, keeping the concentration higher than would be expected at equilibrium. Acid episodes complicate the process of predicting how, during sensitive lifecycle stages, biological systems in the stream will be affected by aluminum.

Metabolic disease in dogs

English springer spaniel puppies can inherit a metabolic disorder that leads to neurological, motor, and developmental impairments resembling those of a debilitating disease of humans, infantile G_{M1}-gangliosidosis (page 470). Both diseases stem from dysfunctions or deficiencies of the enzyme β -galactosidase, which degrades gangliosides. When gangliosides accumulate in cells throughout the body, abnormal cellular development occurs. Loss of motor coordination, accumulation of undegraded metabolites in the brain, mental retardation, and deformation of bones are among the major disease manifestations. Alroy et al. found the ganglioside concentration to be five times the normal level in the brain of an affected dog. Unusual sugars excreted in the dog's urine were reminiscent of the sugar pattern in the human disease. Affected dogs should be helpful in testing new therapies-enzyme and bone marrow replacements and gene insertions-for diseases that result from single enzyme deficiencies.

Dendritic cells assist immune responses

Dendritic cells (DC's) are efficient initiators of immune responses; they present foreign material (antigens) to helper lymphocytes (T cells) that then help B lymphocytes produce the appropriate antibody (page 475). This priming role of DC's has now been demonstrated in culture. DC's are irregularly shaped white blood cells found in the spleen and other lymphoid organs. Stretching out from the main cell body are long processes that, like a spider's web, mechanically trap lymphocytes and perhaps antigens that pass through the spleen. Inaba and Steinman separated DC's from other spleen cells; when T cells were cultured with DC's and antigen, a set of helper T cells was generated that could recognize the antigen. Then, when a small number of these T cells were cultured with B cells, a specific antibody response to the antigen was made.

Immune suppressor during pregnancy

A substance that can suppress or modulate immune responses has been isolated from the urine of pregnant women (page 479). The 85,000-molecular weight molecule uromodulin consists of a single protein chain and sugar. Muchmore and Decker found that purified uromodulin suppressed immune responses by lymphocytes in culture and inhibited the spontaneous cellular toxicity characteristic of certain monocytes. It has been puzzling why pregnant women do not react immunologically to the fetus, which contains not only "self" components but also foreign materials from the father. A nonspecific suppressor produced during pregnancy might curtail immune responses of the mother against fetal tissues and thereby help protect the fetus.

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.

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Addons and Catchons

I wish to announce the discovery of a new particle. It has none of the properties of a boson, meson, operon, or even a solon. For reasons that will become apparent, I will call it an addon. The properties of this particle were predicted by applying the Schroedinger equation to the law of supply and demand. The particle has highly interesting properties in that it is fully visible to one fraction of the population and invisible to another. The particle is both contagious and addictive. Its mass is between 10^7 and 10^{10} measured in dollars.

Evidence of addons has been described in such reputable journals as the New York Times, the Wall Street Journal, and the Chicago Tribune. Funded by Congress with no peer review, certain addon particles (such as a chemistry building in New York, a supercomputer in Florida, and a Science Park in Illinois) are a source of pride to the local communities. According to their proponents, they are invisible to budget-makers at the Office of Management and Budget and in Congress because they qualify as "add ons" and are not in competition for funds with other science projects.

Unfortunately for addons there is an antimatter particle, called the catchon, which has the capacity to make addons visible to everyone. Catchons have the property of gaining momentum over time and become critical when funding crunches arise. At that time budget designers "catch on" to the fact that a decision that they made several years before is more expensive than expected and in fact should be reevaluated in terms of present circumstances. [One example of a catchon is visible in Europe, where a committee headed by Sir John Kendrew is reevaluating past commitments to the European Laboratory for Particle Physics (CERN), in particular, and high energy physics, in general. The committee, in a report released in June, suggested cutbacks as high as 25 percent because previous funding decisions in this area were impairing developments in other areas in science.] Catchons can even cause addon visibility to be exaggerated in regard to original understated costs or overstated scientific values.

Addon aficionados have a defense against catchons. It is the destroyer. Destroyers, as everyone knows, are (i) unlovable, (ii) in vast surplus, and (iii) costly, ranging from 10^7 to 10^{10} dollars. I have not checked out the accuracy of these figures, but individuals whom I respect always explain that the pet project they are championing can be easily funded if the government would build just one less destroyer. As favorite projects become more extravagant-for example, space stations, supercolliders, and orbiting telescopes-the cost of destroyers appears to increase conveniently.

Some individuals who are most indignant at the evasion of peer review for the relatively low-priced chemistry building are among the leading advocates of the supercollider, the Big Bang of budget busting, which they see as an addon. This forces us to reexamine what we mean by peer review and addons. If a group of chemists decides that there must be more money for instrumentation, if a group of biochemists says that the number of grants must be increased for the National Institutes of Health, if a group of high energy physicists says that we need a new particle accelerator, are they peer reviewers or diligent lobbyists for their own areas of science? Are they different from university presidents who are trying to help their institutions, or congressmen watching out for their districts?

In the case of addons, the question is one of facts. Will there really be a net increase in the total budget for science (true addons), or will costs be added initially and then frozen into an inflexible budget that prevents growth in other areas? Right now it cannot be shown convincingly that many of the projects mentioned above fall into either category. New procedures may be needed to evaluate the large projects and to increase funding for scientific research. Science expects to contribute to this crucial policy debate in the future. At the moment, I am off to check on the current price of destroyers .-- DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.

SCIENCE



Enough of Pessimism

A collection of 100 essays written by Philip H. Abelson, Editor of Science from 1962-1984

The 100 essays contained in Enough of Pessimism were written by Philip Abelson during an extraordinary era of modern science when space exploration, the computer, nuclear energy, and genetic engineering were all coming of age. Abelson provides a chronicle of how science and society came to terms with each other during this period while each was suffering growing pains of its own.

Readers of *Enough of Pessimism* have the opportunity to share with Philip Abelson his remarkable affinity for science. He proves to be an astute observer whose ideas are consistently ahead of their time. Abelson demonstrates in his writing a clarity of thought and a toughness of mind that are rare, as well as an overriding spirit of optimism from which this book derives its name.

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