

"Report on Science" Celebrates 5 Years On the Air

DOES smoking affect our genes? Why did insects develop wings? Are grouchy old people better off than their pleasanter peers? How are scientists using lasers to measure atoms? What is happening to health care in Nicaragua?

For 5 years "Report on Science" has been answering these, and hundreds of other questions about science and technology for an audience of some 5 million people. That makes the daily 90-second radio show one of the most important of the Association's "public understanding of science" activities. Coproduced by the AAAS Office of Communications and the CBS Radio Stations News Service, "Report on Science" airs on

commercial stations around the country. AAAS also produces "Focus," a half-hour discussion program that airs on noncommercial radio stations.

With topics ranging from astronomy to psychology, "Report on Science" probes the mysteries of science and describes new research as well as continuing scientific controversies. The program does not only inform—it piques curiosity about the world around us and how things work within it.

Recent programs have described how houseflies walk on glass (they excrete a sticky substance on their feet); how ancient tools are helping scientists to understand how the human brain evolved; how an African lake killed 37 people (an under-

ground disturbance caused the volcanic lake to produce a cloud of carbon dioxide and acid); and how a chemical—bradykinin—turns on pain.

"Report on Science" has explained why the Washington-Moscow hotline could fail when we need it most (and how it could be made fail-safe) and has described the ideas behind the new "superstring" theory of physics (in 90 seconds!).

Allen L. Hammond, editor of *Science* 86, is the on-air reporter/editor; Carol L. Rogers, head of the AAAS Office of Communications and Membership, is the show's executive producer; and Michael Skoler is the writer.

Programs are based on articles appearing in *Science* and *Science* 86, AAAS and other scientific meetings, journals, and other sources.

Recently, the program has begun using sound to complement certain stories. For instance, one story demonstrated how complex data sets are being translated into music so researchers can find patterns quickly by ear. Another featured electronic music produced by certain fish. Researchers use the sounds to study fish social interaction and, according to one scientist, mating produces some very strange music.

Researchers throughout the country play a large role in the production of "Report on Science." In addition to helping check scripts for accuracy, scientists and engineers offer ideas for program topics, suggest sources of information, and explain their own research.

"Report on Science" began airing on CBS stations in Boston, Chicago, Detroit, Los Angeles, New York, Philadelphia, San Francisco, and St. Louis in March 1981. The audience has grown substantially since then and the show is now heard on stations from Salt Lake City and Seattle to Washington, D.C. and San Juan.

If none of the radio stations in your area carry "Report on Science" and you would like to hear the program, write to us. We will work with the CBS Radio

Stations News Service to help bring "Report on Science" to a station in your area. Address letters to Carol L. Rogers, Office of Communications and Membership, at the AAAS address.

Ethics and the Professional

Scientists and engineers are often forced to make difficult ethical decisions—to facilitate that decision-making process, the AAAS Professional Society Ethics Group meets twice a year to discuss the whole range of issues professional scientists and engineers must face. At the Group's meeting last October, representatives from the American Psychiatric Association, the American Psychological Association, and the Council of Biology Editors described selected activities addressing ethical concerns related to their members' professional activities. Representatives from 21 AAAS-affiliated societies participated in the discussion.

Confidentiality

Richard Taranto, an attorney for the American Psychiatric Association, reviewed a recent court decision by the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court regarding a psychiatrist's right to control access to confidential medical records. The court ruled that portions of a patient's medical record must be revealed as part of a grand jury investigation of Medicaid fraud. The Massachusetts Psychiatric Society filed an *amicus curiae* brief opposing disclosure of most portions of patient records on the basis of the psychiatrist-patient privacy privilege.

The court reaffirmed the protection for physician-patient conversations, as well as for the content of therapy sessions, but ruled that a doctor must generally turn over information concerning drugs prescribed, electroshock therapy, and patient diagnoses.

In interpreting the Medicaid laws, the court granted the state and the public, through open



During its December meeting, the AAAS Board of Directors accepted the portrait of the Association's first president—William C. Redfield (*Science*, 1 November 1985, p. 533)—on loan from the Redfield family. Standing next to the portrait are (left to right) chairman of the Board of Directors, David A. Hamburg; president, Gerard Piel; president-elect, Lawrence Bogorad; and newly elected president-elect, Sheila E. Widnall. The portrait is on display in the first-floor reception area at the Association's headquarters.

court proceedings, access to a significant amount of patient information. This action adds to the list of individuals having access to confidential medical information and now may include hospital staff, insurance companies, and government agencies.

The Massachusetts court, attempting to balance the competing rights of the patient's privacy and the state's need to know, rejected the government's claim of full disclosure. The court ruled that any invasion of the patient's right must be no broader than is needed to protect the integrity of the Medicaid program.

Ethics in Animal Research

Recently, the use of animals for scientific experiments has sparked increasing controversy, stirring serious debate between research scientists and animal rights groups. In light of this controversy, the American Psychological Association's Council of Representatives has endorsed comprehensive guidelines for ethical conduct in the case of animals used in behavior research or teaching. Eric Meslin, staff liaison for the Committee on Animal Research and Experimentation at the Association, discussed these guidelines, which include a monitoring mechanism to investigate alleged violations.

The guidelines detail how research animals should be obtained, housed, nourished, and disposed of; who should be responsible for their care; and the

kinds of pain and distress to which they should or should not be subjected during experimentation. Generally, Meslin explained, "psychologists should weigh the probable costs and benefits of the procedures involving animals, making sure that the potential significance of the research outweighs any harm or distress to the animals. Most research programs that do not cause any pain or distress to the animal are acceptable but those that do cause pain or discomfort need strong justification."

The Committee on Animal Research and Experimentation will explain and interpret the guidelines for researchers who are unsure of their own compliance or that of another laboratory. One means of enforcement within guidelines is a clause which states that anyone who wishes to publish an article in an Association-sponsored journal must "attest to the fact that the animal research was conducted in accordance with these guidelines." Further, a researcher may report a violation that has not been resolved at the local level to the Association's Committee on Ethics. If an investigation provides evidence of violations, the Committee may impose sanctions, ranging from a letter of reprimand to censure.

Ethics and Journal Editors

John C. Bailar, chair of the Editorial Policy Committee of the Council of Biology Editors (CBE), described a recent sur-

vey of CBE member opinions regarding ethical issues in publication. The CBE has 650 members who edit publications in the medical, clinical, and laboratory fields. Two main goals of the organization are to educate editors and to provide guidance in the support of research.

The CBE Committee developed ten scenarios to elicit the attitudes and responses of editors regarding significant ethical issues in journal publication. The survey was designed to get CBE members' current perceptions and practices regarding important ethical problems in publishing activities, not to establish a code of professional behavior. Among the scenarios addressed were unconfirmed allegations of fraud; "ownership" of data and the Freedom of Information Act; duplicate publication by authors; and the commitment to publish.

Analysis of survey results is in two phases. The first phase focuses on the scenarios, quoting some examples of the answers received, analyzing the range of options available to journal editors, and exploring implications of various responses to ethical questions. The second phase looks at issues that cut across several scenarios. (For example, the role of full and effective disclosure of journal policies arises in several of the scenarios.) Final results of the survey will be out later this year.

The Professional Society Ethics Group will next meet on 19 March 1986 in Washington,

D.C. All AAAS-affiliated scientific and engineering societies are invited to designate a representative for participation. In addition, the AAAS and the Center for the Study of Ethics in the Professions at the Illinois Institute of Technology will sponsor a 2-day workshop, 24 and 25 May, in Philadelphia as part of the Association's Annual Meeting. The workshop will focus on problems, achievements, and experiences of professional groups in addressing ethical concerns. Professional society officers and staff, journal editors, university faculty, and other professionals interested in ethics are welcome to attend. Further information concerning either meeting may be obtained by writing Sally Painter, Committee on Scientific Freedom and Responsibility, at the AAAS address.

SALLY PAINTER
*Committee on Scientific
Freedom and Responsibility*

Cost Savings for Insured Members

AAAS members insured in the AAAS Group Term Life Insurance plan will receive a premium credit on their 1 April 1986 semiannual bills.

The credit is expected to equal approximately 30 percent of the premium contributions paid while insured during the period 1 October 1984 through 30 September 1985.

This is the second successive

Chairmen and Secretaries of AAAS Sections

MATHEMATICS (A)
Daniel Zelinsky
Lynn Arthur Steen
PHYSICS (B)
Ralph O. Simmons
Rolf M. Sinclair
CHEMISTRY (C)
Rustum Roy
Jea'ne M. Shreeve
ASTRONOMY (D)
David Morrison
John E. Gaustad
GEOLOGY AND
GEOGRAPHY (E)
William H. Matthews III
Helen M. McCammon

BIOLOGICAL SCIENCES (G)

Betty M. Twarog
Judith P. Grassle
ANTHROPOLOGY (H)
Albert C. Spaulding
Priscilla Reining
PSYCHOLOGY (J)
John I. Lacey
William N. Dember
SOCIAL, ECONOMIC, AND
POLITICAL SCIENCES (K)
David Mechanic
David L. Sills
HISTORY AND
PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE (L)
Edward Grant
Arthur L. Norberg
ENGINEERING (M)
Henry McGee
W. Edward Lear

MEDICAL SCIENCES (N)

Alfred P. Fishman
Jonathan E. Rhoads
AGRICULTURE (O)
Roy G. Creech
Ralph J. McCracken
INDUSTRIAL SCIENCE (P)
Robert H. Pry
Robert L. Stern
EDUCATION (Q)
John F. Schaff
Joseph D. Novak
DENTISTRY (R)
Gordon H. Rovelstad
Harold M. Fullmer
PHARMACEUTICAL
SCIENCES (S)
Edward G. Rippie
Betty-ann Hoener

INFORMATION, COMPUTING, AND COMMUNICATION (T)

Karen B. Levitan
Elliot R. Siegel
STATISTICS (U)
J. Stuart Hunter
Edward J. Wegman
ATMOSPHERIC AND
HYDROSPHERIC SCI-
ENCES (W)
F. Kenneth Hare
Bernice Ackerman
SOCIETAL IMPACTS OF
SCIENCE AND
ENGINEERING (X)
Harold P. Green
Rodney W. Nichols

AAAS Divisions

ARCTIC DIVISION
Richard Bushey
President
Gunther E. Weller
Executive Secretary
CARIBBEAN DIVISION
Juan A. Bonnet, Jr.
President
Lucy Gaspar
Secretary-Treasurer
PACIFIC DIVISION
Geoffrey G. E. Scudder
President
Alan E. Leviton
Executive Director

SOUTHWESTERN AND ROCKY MOUNTAIN DIVISION

Donald J. Nash
President
M. Michelle Balcomb
Executive Director

For more information about the activities and publications described in "AAAS News," write to the appropriate office, AAAS, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005, unless otherwise indicated.