

## 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.

**Publisher:** Alvin W. Trivelpiece

**Editor:** Daniel E. Koshland, Jr.

**Deputy Editors:** Philip H. Abelson (*Engineering and Applied Sciences*); John I. Brauman (*Physical Sciences*)

## EDITORIAL STAFF

**Managing Editor:** Patricia A. Morgan

**Assistant Managing Editors:** Nancy J. Hartnagel, John E. Ringle

**Senior Editors:** Eleanore Butz, Ruth Kulstad

**Associate Editors:** Martha Collins, Barbara Jasny, Katrina L. Kelner, Edith Meyers, Phillip D. Szuroni, David F. Voss

**Letters Editor:** Christine Gilbert

**Book Reviews:** Katherine Livingston, *editor*; Deborah F. Washburn

**This Week in Science:** Ruth Levy Guyer

**Contributing Editor:** Lawrence I. Grossman

**Chief Production Editor:** Ellen E. Murphy

**Editing Department:** Lois Schmitt, *head*; Mary McDaniel, Barbara E. Patterson

**Copy Desk:** Lyle L. Green, Sharon Ryan, Beverly Shields, Anna Victoreen

**Production Manager:** Karen Schools

**Assistant Production Manager:** James Landry

**Graphics and Production:** Holly Bishop, Kathleen Cosimano, Eleanor Warner

**Covers Editor:** Grayce Finger

**Manuscript Systems Analyst:** William Carter

## NEWS STAFF

**News Editor:** Barbara J. Culliton

**News and Comment:** Colin Norman, *deputy editor*; Mark H. Crawford, Constance Holden, Eliot Marshall, Marjorie Sun, John Walsh

**Research News:** Roger Lewin, *deputy editor*; Deborah M. Barnes, Richard A. Kerr, Gina Kolata, Jean L. Marx, Arthur L. Robinson, M. Mitchell Waldrop

**European Correspondent:** David Dickson

## BUSINESS STAFF

**Associate Publisher:** William M. Miller, III

**Business Staff Manager:** Deborah Rivera-Wienhold

**Membership Recruitment:** Gwendolyn Huddle

**Member and Subscription Records:** Ann Ragland

**Guide to Biotechnology Products and Instruments:**

Shauna S. Roberts

## ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVES

**Director:** Earl J. Scherago

**Traffic Manager:** Donna Rivera

**Traffic Manager (Recruitment):** Gwen Canter

**Advertising Sales Manager:** Richard L. Charles

**Marketing Manager:** Herbert L. Burklund

**Sales:** New York, NY 10036: J. Kevin Henebry, 1515 Broadway (212-730-1050); Scotch Plains, NJ 07076: C. Richard Callis, 12 Unami Lane (201-889-4873); Chicago, IL 60611: Jack Ryan, Room 2107, 919 N. Michigan Ave. (312-337-4973); San Jose, CA 95112: Bob Brindley, 310 S. 16 St. (408-998-4690); Dorset, VT 05251: Fred W. Dieffenbach, Kent Hill Rd. (802-867-5581); Damascus, MD 20872: Rick Sommer, 24808 Shrubbery Hill Ct. (301-972-9270); U.K., Europe: Nick Jones, +44(0)647/52918; Telex 42513; FAX (0392) 31645.

**Information for contributors** appears on page xi of the 27 March 1987 issue. Editorial correspondence, including requests for permission to reprint and reprint orders, should be sent to 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. Telephone: 202-326-6500.

Advertising correspondence should be sent to Tenth Floor, 1515 Broadway, NY 10036. Telephone 212-730-1050 or WU Telex 968082 SCHERAGO.

## The Budget for Motherhood

THE time has come to adopt a more scientific method for selecting presidents. The recent debate over the roles of character versus issues has highlighted the fact that issues actually get short shrift in any presidential campaign. Everyone says that we should discuss the issues, but practically no one does. The reason is that most pronouncements on issues are duller than daytime television. Character is important, and private life does reveal character, but interest in private life inevitably escalates beyond an appropriate level as the chance of distinguishing among candidates on issues diminishes.

The problem with issues pronouncements is that essentially all candidates sound alike. One can confidently predict that presidential hopefuls during the next year will proclaim that they are for a stronger defense, a greater safety net for the underprivileged and the elderly, strong support for farmers, greater emphasis on education, fairness to immigrants, affirmative action for minorities, job protection against cheap imports, increased competitiveness, no new taxes, and a decreased deficit. These feats will be accomplished by drastic elimination of waste in the military (except in the candidate's own district), fearless elimination of mismanagement in welfare programs (except when it becomes heartless), and the possible imposition of some trifling new taxes that are painless because they do not really apply to anyone. Coming out foursquare for motherhood might not only be more courageous but also more interesting.

The press, which loves scandal and controversy, rarely prints candidates' position papers, aware that few individuals read them. The public does not read them because they are Pious Parchments (see Editorial, 6 March, p. 1125) that reveal little. Candidates are identified as liberals because they sound sincere when they are denouncing the military and are not to be taken seriously when they propose welfare reform; conservatives, on the other hand, are identified because they sound sincere when they demand welfare reform and perfunctory when they talk about eliminating military waste.

To improve the selection process, a genuine objective test would require each candidate to devise a total federal budget. In that way the candidate could no longer hide behind platitudes and would have to reveal his or her true priorities. To make it a real test, the previous year's federal budget, including the actual federal income and expenses, would be used as the control. Candidates would be asked to present only the differences they would suggest from the previous budget for their proposed budgets for the following year. In that manner, advocates of increasing the budget in any category would have to name the new taxes they would levy or confess that the total deficit would be increased. Those who state that they would reduce military or welfare budgets would have to indicate how, by how much, and where the money was to be shifted. Last year's income and outlay figures would be essential so that candidates would be prevented from indulging in dubious estimates about the rising gross national product allowing all proposed spending increments without concomitant increases in taxes. Allowing only changes to be articulated would prevent pages and pages of sleep-inducing rhetoric which, when deciphered, turn out to recommend a 1 percent cut in the military budget or a 0.5 percent cut in subsidies to farmers.

Those weak of heart would say that candidates would refuse to follow this procedure, but in recent years candidates have learned that they must provide their income taxes and financial statements, that they are expected to take part in public debates, and that their private lives are fair game. Persistent questions (mainly from reporters) demanding hard decisions instead of soporific clichés would lead some candidates to take forthright stands and shame others into following suit.

This plan is a particularly appropriate innovation for the upcoming race in which no candidate has yet assumed a clear lead. If candidates really wish to discuss issues instead of having their private lives examined, they will have to discuss issues in a meaningful way. Proclaiming love of mother costs nothing and is banal. Stating that you will sell your Porsche to support her in the manner to which she has become accustomed is meaningful and arouses interest.—DANIEL E. KOSHLAND, JR.