

INSIDE AAAS

Why AAAS Doesn't Lobby. Much.

AAAS is exempt from taxes. It qualifies as an exempt organization under Section 501(c)(3) of the U.S. tax code, so long as it is not seen to be "carrying on propaganda, or otherwise attempting to influence legislation." The Internal Revenue Service can revoke that tax-exempt status if AAAS lobbies.

Yet the AAAS goal is the advancement of science, these days in part an unavoidably political aim. A recent survey of its members showed they strongly believe AAAS should collaborate with government on science policy issues. So AAAS, with offices located in the world's most political town, can't ignore the political process.

The Association has recently put into writing its policy governing communications with Congress. "What this does is set the framework and buttress the peculiar position that AAAS has over the years staked out for itself," notes J. Thomas Ratchford, associate executive officer. That position "is one of heavy involvement in the policy process on Capitol Hill, but playing the role of the gray eminence and adviser rather than the hard-nosed lobbyist, which some of our collegial organizations have opted for."

Certain activities are strictly forbidden—campaigning for or



On "Science Journal", science journalists interview each other and assorted experts about the week's developments in science and policy. Among the regulars on the new PBS show is Science news editor Barbara Culliton (second from left), shown with (from left) the Washington Post's Larry Thompson, host Anne Garrels, and Science & Government Report's Dan Greenberg. The first weekly TV news program about science, "Science Journal" originates in Washington at 8 p.m. Thursdays. It airs Sundays in many parts of the U.S.; consult, as they say, your local listings.

against candidates, exhortations to the membership for or against legislation. There is, however, some maneuvering room. The IRS has yet to issue regulations spelling out what is permissible, but a tax lawyers' rule-of-thumb holds that if AAAS spends less than five percent of its annual income on lobbying activities, its tax-exempt status is probably secure.

As a first principle, AAAS encourages officer and staff communications with Congress. It urges response to congressional requests for information, advice and analysis, and occasionally conveys to Con-

gress ideas from the science and engineering communities. Fortunately, an invitation from Congress to testify at a hearing—virtually all congressional testimony is invited—doesn't count as lobbying. AAAS staff and officers who testify also speak as individuals, not as surrogates for the Association.

In addition, the Association legally can—and does—take positions on activities related to "self-defense"—matters that directly affect its own existence. Thus AAAS has recently expressed its dismay at proposals to increase taxes on advertising revenue from journals published by nonprofit organizations. In a news article published 19 August, *Science* claimed the cost to it would be \$2 million more a year. "We've been scurrying around, we've had a number of meetings with congressional staff," says Ratchford. "We're not doing any blitz by any means, but we

are exercising modestly our self-defense prerogative here."

If there is a murky area, it is when AAAS staff works with congressional staff to help shape science-related legislation. However, "in terms of Association activities overall, it's a minor thing," says William G. Wells, Jr., the science and technology policy consultant who edits the AAAS *Congressional Bulletin*. "The actual amount of resources is really trivial, never close to impinging on that five per cent limit."

Avoidance of lobbying is a fairly recent development for AAAS. "The Association in early years was a very active outfit. It took positions on very important legislation," according to Wells. In 1887, for example, it urged Congress to establish a Bureau of Standards and sought a reduction of the tariff on scientific books and apparatus. During the Depression, it opposed cuts in R&D. In the 1940s, it coordinated activities of several science organizations to help push through legislation setting up the National Science Foundation. "You don't see anything like that these days," Wells observes.

Despite what Wells characterizes as "leaning over backward not to be perceived as lobbying," AAAS is viewed as a lobbyist by at least one organization: the Periodical Correspondents Association of Congress. This group has for some years denied *Science* reporters a place in the Congressional Press Galleries because AAAS staff and officers testify before Congress. The correspondents' group says letting *Science* in would violate its rule admitting publications only if the parent organization "does not engage,

“The worst possible thing that could happen policy-wise, as a reaction to the Yellowstone fires, is to go back to a fire-suppression policy.”

Robert V. O'Neill, research ecologist at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, at a AAAS science writers seminar on 15 September

directly or indirectly, in any lobbying or other activity intended to influence any matter before Congress." The rule does not apply to profit-making organizations.

■ **TABITHA M. POWLEDGE**

Gibbons Joins Board

John H. Gibbons, the physicist who has directed the congressional Office of Technology Assessment since 1979, has joined the AAAS Board of Directors. His term runs through the 1991 Annual Meeting.

From 1974–79, Gibbons was professor of physics and director of the Energy, Environment, and Resources Center at the University of Tennessee, and in 1973–74 he directed the Office of Energy Conservation at the Federal Energy Administration. For the previous two decades he was affiliated with Oak Ridge National Lab. He received a B.S. from Randolph-Macon College (1949) and a Ph.D. from Duke (1954).

Grad Student Prizes

Grad students and recent graduate degree recipients can win \$100 prizes and other awards for their poster presentations at the Annual Meeting January

14–19 in San Francisco. Abstracts are due 1 November and must be endorsed by a AAAS member or Fellow. Rules and other details are available from Alan Leviton, Pacific Division AAAS, California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco 94118 (415/752-1554), or Michele Aldrich, AAAS, 1333 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005 (202/326-6486).

Be a Critic

The Office of Communications needs members in the Washington area to help screen radio and TV entries in the AAAS-Westinghouse Science Journalism Awards contest for scientific accuracy. If you can come to AAAS headquarters at 1333 H St. NW to screen entries in your scientific discipline, please get in touch with Joan Wrather (202/326-6440) immediately.

AAAS Council

The AAAS Council will hold its next meeting on 18 January 1989 during the Annual Meeting in San Francisco. Organizations or individuals who want to present proposals or resolutions for possible inclusion in the meeting agenda should send them (in writing) to Exec-

Want to Get *Science* Free?

Would you like to get *Science* free? We're trying to improve our delivery system. To pinpoint particular trouble spots, we need 25 volunteers to keep track of when they receive their copies of *Science* and other AAAS mailings, and report the results to us. In return for performing these light chores, the

volunteers we select will receive AAAS membership at no cost for a year. We especially need volunteers from academic institutions in the western U.S. Write Laurie Baker, AAAS Membership Office, 1333 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Please enclose a recent mailing label from *Science*.

■ **JOHN COLSON, Director of Membership**

utive Officer Alvin W. Trivel-piece by 26 October 1988.

The items should be consistent with AAAS objectives and deal with matters appropriate for consideration by the council of a scientific organization. Each should be given a brief title.

Resolutions should be in the traditional format, beginning with "whereas" statements of fact and concluding "therefore be it resolved," followed by a position that flows logically from the stated premises. Items dealing with technical matters must be accompanied by supporting data and references.

Proposals involving substantial expenditure of AAAS funds should be presented in the form of a research proposal and accompanied by a budget.

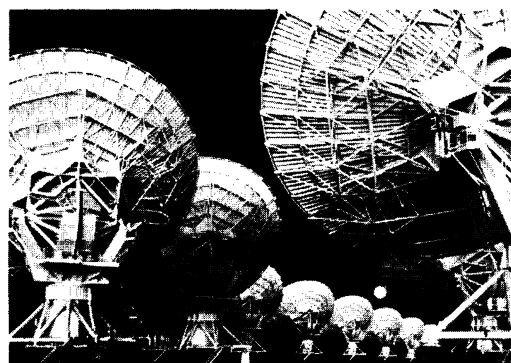
Items adopted by the Council will be published in *Science*. If you seek wider distribution, you should submit names and addresses of the target individuals, organizations or publications along with your proposal.

The Committee on Council Affairs will hold an open hearing on the items submitted at 2:30 p.m. on 15 January at the San Francisco Hilton. Late proposals or resolutions delivered to the Executive Officer in advance will be considered following the hearing, provided they deal with urgent matters and are accompanied by a written explanation of why they were not submitted by the fall deadline.

The committee also will review and take action on requests from those who wish to address the council meeting on agenda items. Such requests must be delivered to the Executive Officer or committee chairman Richard C. Atkinson before the 15 January meeting.

Summaries of the council meeting agenda will be available during the Annual Meeting at the AAAS Information Desk at the Hilton. The full agenda can also be inspected.

■ **MARGE WHITE, Executive Office**



Janet Saad-Cook © 1987

"The Very Large Array with Full Moon" will be one of artist Janet Saad-Cook's works on exhibit at the AAAS from 31 October to 27 January. She has received permission from the National Radio Observatory to build a structure at the Very Large Array radio telescope site in Socorro, New Mexico, that will house constantly changing abstract forms created by sunlight falling on reflective materials. Models and photographs of this "sun-drawing" project will be part of the exhibit, in the First Floor Atrium at 1333 H St. NW, Washington, D.C.