

# Letters

## Journal Cancellations

Most scientists are now aware of a problem librarians have recognized for some time: the rising cost of scientific journals (1). The reasons and solutions have been debated for several years, during which time libraries have engaged in subscription review and cancellation projects (2). Scientists in academic institutions are most likely aware of the cancellations at their own institution, but the collective impact on a group of libraries has not been previously reported.

As part of a journal cancellation project in 1988 we asked peer institutions in our five-state region (Texas, Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, and New Mexico) to send us lists of journal cancellations for 1987 through 1989. We compiled this information into a single list with the following results.

| Action                  | 1987 | 1988 | 1989 |
|-------------------------|------|------|------|
| Libraries reporting     | 3    | 14   | 13   |
| Titles cancelled        | 241  | 1955 | 1111 |
| Subscriptions cancelled | 246  | 2381 | 1256 |

Twenty medical libraries reported cancellations; these represent the major medical research libraries in the region. A total of 3883 subscriptions to 2777 titles have been cancelled for the 3-year period. The largest number of cancellations reported by one library was 824 subscriptions for 1988; the next largest was 359 subscriptions for 1989. In comparing the number of titles to the number of subscriptions cancelled, we noted that many unique titles appear to have been cancelled.

On the basis of conversations with librarians throughout the country we believe our experience is not unique, despite the recent economic recession in the oil patch.

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## REFERENCES

1. C. Holden, *Science* **236**, 908 (1987); S. Greene, *The Scientist* **1**, 6 (1987).
2. H. H. Barschall, *Phys. Today* **41**, 56 (1988); R. M. Dougherty and B. L. Johnson, *Libr. J.* **113**, 27 (1988); R. M. Dougherty, *J. Acad. Libr.* **14**, 4 (1988).

## Cat Research at Cornell

Colin Norman's article "Cat study halted amid protests" (News & Comment, 18 Nov., p. 1001) prompts this letter.

Cornell University strongly defends the right of its faculty members to conduct research in areas they deem of interest. The university regrets any implication that it has acted or will act otherwise. Established university policies and procedures ensure that Cornell faculty enjoy academic freedom. Cornell's policies also ensure that research protocols comply with all relevant state and federal regulations governing the use of human subjects and the humane use of animals in research. There should be no misunderstandings about either the university's commitment to academic freedom or to the support of its faculty members and researchers engaged in animal research. Cornell will continue to defend faculty members from intimidation as we have done in the past.

Cornell understands and recognizes the ethical issues involved in animal research. Its policy is to use as few animals as possible, to use alternative methods to live animals wherever possible, and to keep animals as comfortable as possible, minimizing any pain or distress. I appreciate that some individuals regret any use of animals in research. In some cases, however, it is only by using animals that society is able to obtain the information needed to fight disease and alleviate human pain. The university will continue to defend the rights of its faculty to use animals in research when work of scientific merit and medical importance cannot be achieved through other means.

During the past year and one-half, the dean of the Medical College, G. Tom Shires, and his predecessor, Thomas H. Meikle, each assured Michiko Okamoto that she was free to conduct her research consistent with university policies. The position of the Medical College as stated in August 1987 by Associate Dean Gregory Siskind was made in the belief that Okamoto had indicated that her barbiturate addiction research requiring the use of cat models essentially had been completed and that the future research done in her laboratory would require the use of new models, methods, and experimental systems that would not involve cats. It was only after the statement from Gregory Siskind was released that Okamoto realized the position expressed by the Medical College was more broad than she had intended. She believed that the research involving the cat model was not entirely complete but that a particular phase of the research involving many cats had been completed. The subsequent submission by Okamoto and by the

Medical College of a proposal to the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) for a transition grant involving barbiturate addiction research using cats and then rats reflected Okamoto's understanding that her research on cats could continue. NIDA denied funding for the portion of the grant involving rats. After discussion with the Medical College, Okamoto withdrew her proposal for the partial NIDA grant funding. At the same time Dean Shires agreed to fund her research with Cornell's resources. In doing so, Dean Shires has made it clear to Okamoto that it is her decision as to whether she wishes to resume research on chronic barbiturate addiction using cats at this time. As recently as 29 November she indicated to Medical College officials that she does not wish to do so.

Consistent with Cornell's policies on academic freedom, Okamoto continues to be free to pursue her research within normal university guidelines with university funding. In the past, the university has rigorously defended the rights of its faculty to conduct research consistent with the protections of academic freedom. It will continue to do so in the future.

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*Response:* Cornell officials have consistently maintained that the sole reason for declining the NIDA grant was to preserve the university's credibility, because the August 1987 statement had implied that no more cats would be used in Okamoto's experiments. While it would indeed be courageous for Cornell itself to fund the experiments on cats, as Shires has apparently offered to do, it is difficult to see how the university's credibility would be any different if it, rather than NIDA, funded the studies.—COLIN NORMAN

*Erratum:* Lines 16 and 17 of column 1 of page 824 in the report "Relaxation of isolated ventricular cardiomyocytes by a voltage-dependent process" by John H. B. Bridge *et al.* (12 Aug., p. 823) should have read, "In most of our later experiments,  $MgCl_2$  was decreased to 200  $\mu M$  (3.0 mM  $MgATP$ , 0 mM  $NaCl$ , 0 mM  $EGTA$ )."

*Erratum:* In the third sentence of the third paragraph of the Research News article by Richard A. Kerr "Does Earth fill its own magnetosphere with ions?" (21 Oct., p. 377), the number of air molecules per cubic centimeter was incorrectly stated. The sentence should have read, "Air at sea level has more than a billion billion molecules per cubic centimeter."

*Erratum:* On page 489 of the Table of Contents for the issue of 28 October 1988, the title of the report "Single subunits of the GABA<sub>A</sub> receptor form ion channels with properties of the native receptor" by L. A. C. Blair *et al.* was incorrectly printed.