edited by DIANA PARSELL

In mid-April, AAAS will move to the Association's new Center for Science and Engineering. The address is: 1200 New York Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20005. The current phone numbers of AAAS departments and personnel will not change.

From Our History Files...

Good science books can trigger career interest early on. That was the thinking behind AAAS's Traveling Science Libraries, which began in 1955 and continued for 9 years.

The idea grew from a lunch discussion between U.S. education officials and representatives of AAAS and the National Science Foundation (NSF). Knowing that many U.S. schools had meager libraries, NSF offered to sponsor a "lending library" of science books if AAAS would administer the program. Retired ichthyologist Hilary Deason agreed to manage it.

A collection of 150 titles was compiled, and sets of the books were sent to 66 high schools. Over the next 6 years, the titles grew to 200 and a total of 6000 high schools participated. The program expanded to elementary schools in 1959, using a different set of 160 titles, and demand was even greater.

As schools acquired money for library acquisitions, the program's annotated catalogs were in demand as buying guides. So AAAS began publishing *The Science Book List*, with 900 recommended science books for high schools, and a companion list for younger readers. Several editions sold out rapidly. A AAAS guide to science books in paperback issued from 1957 to 1961 also was popular and was taken over by a commercial publisher.

After funding for the traveling libraries program expired in 1964, AAAS soon introduced a new quarterly review of science books. It survives today as *Science Books & Films*.

Source: AAAS Bulletin, *issues of Jan. 1961–March 1964; "Traveling High-School Science Libraries," by Hilary J. Deason,* Science, *23 November 1956.*

Project Expands Access to Science

Margaret Tunstall is known at AAAS as someone who doesn't throw much out. Her office abuts a closet piled with recycled milk jugs, yogurt cartons, ice cube trays, and other items used in the workshops she does around the country to train teachers and community volunteers in "hands-on" science experiments for young people.

Now, in a project Tunstall calls "the most exciting thing I've been involved in during my 4 years at AAAS," those experiments are being modified for children with disabilities.

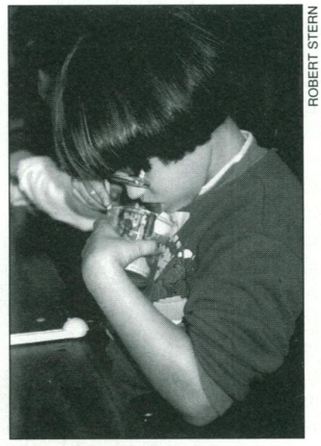
The 2-year pilot project, "Access Science," was launched last year by the AAAS Program on Science, Technology, and Disability in collaboration with the National Easter Seals Society. Funding comes from the National Science Foundation. The experiments, developed by AAAS around 12 themes in the natural sciences, will be published and disseminated by Easter Seals.

"It's real science, adapted to the way all kids can do it," says Tunstall, a former teacher whose major focus has been the development of AAAS programs designed to promote greater interest in science among girls and minorities.

Exposure to science in school is "almost non-existent" for children with disabilities, Tunstall explains, because of scheduling conflicts with special classes and a lack of adapted activities. So the informal, out-of-school "Access Science" activities are a new adventure for many of the students involved so far. "The kids love it. Their response is remarkable," Tunstall says.

Her colleague Laureen Summers, a woman with cerebral palsy, says she had no science growing up because of a common attitude that people with disabilities couldn't do science. Her excitement about the project stems from "directly contradicting so many of the assumptions that people carry."

The experiments, which use inexpensive materials, are designed to be family-oriented. Children with multiple disabilities and their families organized by two Easter Seals chapters in the Washington, D.C., area act as "research assistants," testing the activities and suggesting needed changes. In a chemistry experiment, for example, small water bottles too rigid for some children to squeeze led Tunstall searching for a softer plastic substitute.


ROBERT STERN

"Hands-on" testing. Eight-year-old Cathy Stevenson, who has cerebral palsy, does a AAAS science activity.

Ann King, D.C.-area program director of an Easter Seals project called Family Friends, helps coordinate the "Access Science" workshops. "The parents are as excited as the kids," she says. "I don't think anything would keep some of these families away."

For information, contact Tunstall in the AAAS Education and Human Resources Directorate, by phone at 202-326-6674 or by e-mail at mtunstal@aaas.org.

Manpower Update

After two decades of major strides in broadening the diversity of people in science and engineering, progress is slowing down and parity with white males remains a long way off for women and minority groups, according to a series of status reports prepared for AAAS.

The five papers focus on conditions for women, African Americans, Hispanics, Native Americans, and people with disabilities, who are underrepresented in science and engineering. Accomplishments of the groups are cited, along with lingering barriers that limit educational and career opportunities and advancement.

The findings have far-reaching implications because present-day minority groups are expected to make up about half of the U.S. population by the middle of the next century. Yet African- American and other minority scientists and engineers are in short supply, "and their numbers are not growing at a rate that would promise parity even over a generation or two," one report notes.

AAAS's Science Linkages in the Community Initiative commissioned the reports. They were done by Betty M. Vetter, who headed the Commission on Professionals in Science and Technology until her death in November 1994.

Some of the findings:

■ Despite improvement over time, mathematics achievement levels for African-American students "are not good enough to prepare them for careers in science and technology." One bright note: a surge of black students with B.A. degrees in computer science.

■ Women in engineering receive slightly higher starting salaries than their male counterparts, but the advantage quickly disappears as the men are promoted faster. For doctoral scientists and engineers, the salary gap begins with the very first job and widens over time.

■ Low levels of education drastically hinder career opportunities for Hispanics. The 1990 census found that only 44 percent of Mexican Americans—the largest U.S. Hispanic group—and 51 percent of American Hispanics overall completed at least high school.

Copies are available from the AAAS Distribution Center at 1-800-222-7809, or 301-490-0056 for local and international calls. The cost is $7.50 per report or $25 for the full set.