

# Public Information Service

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For the AAAS New York meeting, an unusually strong local committee on public information was appointed last summer to help set the stage for this complex operation. It was composed of ten members and headed by Marion Harper, Jr., president of McCann-Erickson, Inc. Richard J. Farricker, vice president of this well-known firm, and Murray Martin, vice president of Communications Counselors, Inc., "carried the ball" initially and met with us in October on two occasions at the AAAS Washington office. Soon after these conferences, we met again in Washington with Michael Sklar, who was assigned by the Columbia Broadcasting System to produce the hour-long AAAS-CBS coast-to-coast television show, *The New Frontier*, on Sunday afternoon, 30 Dec.

Early in December, Martin arranged a meeting of the local committee at the Metropolitan Club in New York, which Raymond L. Taylor and I attended. Plans recommended by the committee for premeeting public information were adopted. A week following, as part of this plan, a press conference was arranged by William Falvey of Communications Counselors, Inc., at the Hotel Statler for the purposes of announcing the highlights of the coming convention and of interviewing Oscar Touster, associate professor of biochemistry, Vanderbilt University School of Medicine, as winner of the Theobald Smith Award in the Medical Sciences for 1956. This was one of the most successful premeeting press conferences ever held by the Association. It was set up in less than 48 hours with the assistance of Allan D. Bass of Vanderbilt and secretary of AAAS Section N (Medicine).

Meanwhile, Virginia Casey of Communications Counselors, Inc., had come into the picture and did a remarkable job, before and during the meeting, arranging radio and television programs in

cooperation with Alec Jordan, my associate in charge of air programs. The latter worked closely with the AAAS-CBS show, which was so ably produced by Michael Sklar. Many of the talks during the meeting were taped by the major networks, the City of New York Municipal Broadcasting System, the Voice of America, and others and will be on the air for weeks to come. Before and during the meeting, 31 AAAS radio and television programs were broadcast from the New York area.

Secretaries and program chairmen of the 18 AAAS sections meeting in New York and those of the 87 participating societies and officers of the Association cooperated splendidly with this department and, for the most part, so did the 1350 authors of papers on the program. The only complaint from science writers in the press room at New York was that there were not enough *complete* papers available to supplement corresponding abstracts which appeared to be newsworthy. Special commendation must be recorded in this report for H. B. Sprague, professor of agronomy, Pennsylvania State University, and secretary of AAAS Section O (Agriculture). The program arranged by this section on grasslands and its cooperation with the department were outstanding both in content and early preparation.

Two hundred twelve accredited reporters representing the press, radio, and television registered in the press room at the Hotel Statler. Victor E. Cohn, science editor of the *Minneapolis Tribune*, was given the press-room prize for being the science writer farthest from home. Sixty-three other individuals in the United States and abroad reported the meeting from nontechnical abstracts and complete papers mailed to them before and during the convention. All American and several foreign wire services, including the Tass News Agency, plus all leading news magazines were represented.

Many remarked that the coverage by New York newspapers was good. Mayor Wagner's "Science Week in New York City" proclamation was especially appre-

ciated. News stories and wire pictures concerning the meeting must have been published widely outside New York, because clippings from many publications in this country and abroad are now being received. Feature stories, not requiring close deadlines, are beginning to appear in various publications and will probably continue to be published for some time to come.

For assistance in the press room at New York, we are grateful to McCann-Erickson, Inc., for contributing the services of five efficient secretaries for the 5 days of the meeting, Patricia Alexandre, Vicky Barnes, Shirley Gilson, Jane Lester, and Patricia Turano; to Communications Counselors, Inc., for making available to us the expert "know-how" of William Falvey and Virginia Casey; to Arthur D. Little, Inc., for contributing the services of Irving Telling as a press room associate; to the General Electric Company Research Laboratory for holding open house each evening for all science reporters in attendance; to the American Tobacco Company Research Laboratory, and Chas. Pfizer and Company, Inc., for providing luncheons in the press room during the meeting; to the Florida Citrus Commission, Eastern Airlines, and Noyes and Sproul, Inc., for the hospitable serving of fresh orange juice continuously each day in the press room; to Richard Magat of New York University, Office of Information Services, for arranging the party for science writers at the Faculty Club; to Dudley, Anderson and Yutzy of New York for entertaining the press each evening in its suite at the Statler; to Raymond S. Ashbaugh, convention manager of the Hotel Statler, for providing quickly and efficiently ideal press-room facilities; to Michael Sklar for his outstanding production of the AAAS-CBS television show; and to the "old-timers" of the National Association of Science Writers for invaluable technical advice.

Associates in the press room at New York were Thelma C. Heatwole of Staunton, Va., Wayne Taylor of Austin, Tex., Myron Weiss of New York City, Foley F. Smith of Richmond, Va., and Alec Jordan of New York. These individuals and the six others already mentioned were of invaluable aid in getting material quickly to reporters to whom, more than to any others, goes the credit for helping to make possible one of the four principal objectives of the AAAS: to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress. The Association is deeply appreciative of the outstanding world-wide coverage of its annual meetings by members of the NASW and other representatives of the Fourth Estate.

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