

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION
FOR THE
ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE

Board of Directors

LAURENCE H. SNYDER, *President*
WALLACE R. BRODE, *President Elect*
PAUL B. SEARS, *Retiring President*
PAUL M. GROSS
GEORGE R. HARRISON
PAUL E. KLOPSTEG
CHAUNCEY D. LEAKE
MARGARET MEAD
THOMAS PARK
WILLIAM W. RUBEY
ALAN T. WATERMAN
PAUL A. SCHERER, *Treasurer*
DAEL WOLFFLE, *Executive Officer*

DAEL WOLFFLE, *Executive Officer*
GRAHAM DUSHANE, *Editor*
CHARLOTTE V. MEETING, *Associate Editor*
JOSEPH TURNER, *Assistant Editor*

Editorial Board

WALLACE R. BRODE EDWIN M. LERNER
BENTLEY GLASS WILLIAM L. STRAUS, JR.
KARL LARK-HOROVITZ EDWARD L. TATUM

Editorial Staff

PATRICIA L. CARSON, MARY L. CRABILL, HARRY
DAVID, SARAH S. DEES, NANCY S. HAMILTON,
OLIVER W. HEATWOLE, YUKIE KOZAI, ELLEN E.
MURPHY, ROBERT V. ORMES, BETHSABE PEDERSEN,
MADELINE SCHNEIDER, JANE STINE, JACQUELYN
VOLLMER

EARL J. SCHERAGO, *Advertising Representative*

SCIENCE, founded in 1880, is published each Friday by the American Association for the Advancement of Science at Business Press, Lancaster, Pa. Entered at the Lancaster, Pa., Post Office as second class matter under the Act of 3 March 1879.

SCIENCE is indexed in the *Reader's Guide to Periodical Literature* and in the *Industrial Arts Index*.

Editorial and personnel-placement correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C. Manuscripts should be typed with double spacing and submitted in duplicate. The AAAS assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts or for the opinions expressed by contributors. For detailed suggestions on the preparation of manuscripts, book reviews, and illustrations, see *Science* 125, 16 (4 Jan. 1957).

Display-advertising correspondence should be addressed to SCIENCE, Room 740, 11 West 42 St., New York 36, N.Y.

Change of address notification should be sent to 1515 Massachusetts Ave., NW, Washington 5, D.C., 4 weeks in advance. If possible, furnish an address stencil label from a recent issue. Be sure to give both old and new addresses, including zone numbers, if any.

Annual subscriptions: \$7.50; foreign postage, \$1; Canadian postage, 50¢. Single copies, 25¢. Special rates to members of the AAAS. Cable address: Advancesci, Washington.

Rates effective 1 January 1958: \$8.50; foreign postage, \$1.50; Canadian postage, 75¢. Single copies, 25¢.



The Voice of the Reader

A carpenter—a friend of long ago—discussed with his wife the details of the home they planned to build for themselves. Regretfully he concluded that he could not satisfy all her wishes, for what she wanted was a nice little house with a lot of great big rooms.

We feel a bit like the carpenter, for, figuratively, we have been listening to several thousand *Science* readers tell us what they want *Science* to be. Their replies to a questionnaire that we recently mailed to a ten-percent sample of AAAS members are generous, clear, sometimes pungent, and sometimes mutually contradictory. If we tried to comply with all of the most frequently made recommendations, *Science* would be no larger than it now is but would contain more news, more editorials, more review articles, more technical reports, and more articles on the relations of science to education, government, and social affairs; it would be less technical and broader in its coverage; would devote more attention to foreign books and news; and would be more like *Nature*, the *American Scientist*, and the *Scientific American*. This edition would do for most readers, but there would also have to be special editions for those who want *Science* to be less like these other magazines, those who want fewer technical articles, and those who want us to “cut down on political clap-trap.”

When several thousand members express their divergent views on such a matter as editorial policy, it is always possible to find diametrically opposed recommendations. One could, in fact, select a rather ridiculously contradictory set of suggestions. But to do so would be to miss the opportunity to learn the consensus that underlies the variety. And consensus there is.

One recurring request is for more technical reports. Another is for more brief, authoritative reviews of the state of knowledge in active research fields—those difficult-to-find articles that are “scientific” but that are so written as to be understandable to scientists in other fields. A third is for more articles on the relations of science to education, government, and society. A fourth is a frequent plea for brevity; an industrial chemist wrote: “*Science*, slim, readable and pertinent . . . [is] read and enjoyed, while the overlarded ——— is regularly chucked into my wastebasket, unopened.”

These wishes fit into a pattern. The time for reading is limited, and so is the knowledge one has in fields other than his own. *Science*—as many readers explicitly pointed out—is the journal to read to keep up with advances in other fields of science and with the forces of society that affect the development of science.

Together with suggestions and criticisms concerning individual aspects of science, the questionnaire gave added evidence that the readers are keenly interested. We had a 70-percent return to our questionnaire; commercial magazines are frequently happy to get a 30-percent return. Moreover, two-thirds of the respondents not only answered the questions but added comments and suggestions of their own. These free replies ranged from, “*Science* is so much worse . . . than it was 20 years ago that I see no use in filling out an obviously stupid questionnaire,” to, “I prize my *Science*, adore its present style and if it is expanded to twice its present size I would simply double my reading time . . . make *Science* bigger, you can’t make it *much* better.”

In between these extremes were hundreds of thoughtful comments and suggestions for which the editorial staff is sincerely grateful. It will be impossible for us to comply with all of them, but we will keep the house as trim and compact as we can and will include as many great big rooms as we can squeeze in.—D. W.