

Science in the News

Ubell and Morrison To Receive AAAS-Westinghouse Awards

This year's AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Awards will go to Earl Ubell, science editor of the New York *Herald Tribune*, and Philip Morrison, professor of physics at Cornell University. The \$1000 prizes will be presented on 27 December at a dinner in New York (Commodore Hotel, 6 P.M.) during the Association's annual meeting.

The judges also selected two additional writers to receive honorable mention for excellence in science writing, one in the newspaper and one in the magazine field. William Hines, science reporter for the Washington (D.C.) *Evening Star* will receive the newspaper citation. Winner of the honorable mention in the magazine field is Edwin Diamond, science editor of *Newsweek*.

News Winner

Ubell won his award for an article entitled, "How Joke Begot Theory of Universe," which appeared in the *Herald Tribune* on 11 April 1960. His article, written while he was covering a series of lectures at Cornell, compared the "big bang," or expanding universe, theory with the "steady-state" theory. The steady-state theory was lightly tossed off by Thomas Gold in a conversation with Hermann Bondi at Cambridge University, England, in 1946, and he ended his brief exposition with the statement, "There. That should take you five minutes to rip apart!" But Bondi and others since then have found no basic flaw in the theory. Ubell explained the implications of both theories and showed what observations would be necessary to invalidate the steady-state theory.

Born in Brooklyn in 1926, Ubell attended high school there and graduated from City College, New York, with Phi Beta Kappa honors and a major in physics. He has received numerous other awards, including the Lasker Award for Medical Journalism and honorable mention in last year's AAAS-Westing-

house contest. Ubell joined the staff of the *Herald Tribune* in 1948, began to specialize in science writing in 1951, and has been science editor since 1953.

Magazine Winner

Philip Morrison's prize-winning article, "Cause, Chance, and Creation," appeared in the 30 April 1960 issue of the *Saturday Evening Post* as part of the series "Adventures of the Mind." The piece contrasted the modern statistical picture of atoms and electrons with the older, strictly predetermined causality of Laplace and Newton.

Morrison was born in Somerville, N.J., in 1915, received a B.S. degree from the Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1936 and a Ph.D. in theoretical physics from the University of California in 1940. He has taught at San Francisco State College and the University of Illinois. After a year with the atomic bomb project at the University of Chicago in 1943-44, he became group leader in physics at the Los Alamos Laboratory of the University of California. He has been on the Cornell faculty since 1946.

Honorable Mention Winners

Hines won honorable mention in newspaper writing for his 23-part series of articles on "The Atomic Years" published from 12 June to 7 July 1960 in the Washington *Evening Star*.

In the magazine field, Diamond received honorable mention for his "Life in Outer Space," which appeared in the 22 February issue of *Newsweek*.

Judges

A group of distinguished representatives from the fields of journalism, science, and education selected the winners. The judges were Earl English, dean of the school of journalism at the University of Missouri; Alfred Friendly, managing editor, Washington *Post and Times Herald*; George Gallup, director, American Institute of Public Opinion; Morris Meister, president of Bronx Community College; Gerard

Piel, editor and publisher, *Scientific American*; and Alan Waterman, director of the National Science Foundation.

The AAAS-Westinghouse Science Writing Awards were established to give recognition and encouragement to outstanding science writing, to stimulate public interest in science, and to foster a deeper understanding of science by the general public. The awards are made possible by a grant from the Westinghouse Educational Foundation.

Sherburne To Head New AAAS Program To Improve Public Understanding

The AAAS takes pleasure in announcing the appointment of Edward G. Sherburne, Jr., to head the Association's new program to improve public understanding of science. Sherburne, who graduated in mathematics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1941, has some 12 years of varied experience in educational television, part of which has been devoted to significant science programs. At present he is statewide coordinator of educational television for the University of California and is responsible for budgeting, coordinating, and supervising television development on all seven of the university's campuses.

Background for the Appointment

For some time the AAAS Board of Directors has been considering ways in which the Association could be more effective in improving public understanding of science. More than a year ago the Board decided that it was time to find a staff member who could provide leadership in this increasingly important area—someone who would keep his eye on the entire realm of science communication to the public and use his influence to close gaps as they develop. Although no definite plans have been made, the Board's deliberations produced many ideas that are the basis for the new appointment.

At the outset, there was emphatic agreement that the appointee should not function as a news bureau chief or a public relations man. Rather, it was felt that he should have broad responsibility for helping groups and organizations of all kinds—especially those in the mass media—to provide better material on science for the public. In particular, he could help scientists and scientific associations explain their activities.



Edward G. Sherburne, Jr.

It was felt that, although the new staff member should work largely through other agencies, he might well develop independent programs—perhaps seminars to bring together scientists and editors and scientists and television people, for example. Or again, he might set up a consultation service to aid the local groups now being established in a number of cities to provide information on such subjects as water and air pollution, radiation hazards, and fluoridation.

When presented with some of these suggestions, Sherburne expressed himself on a philosophical point that he feels is essential to the development of his office. "The basic ingredient which must underlie a sound program of public education," he says, "is respect for the knowledge to be shared, and the correlates of respect for the specialist sharing it, and for the recipients. While this may be almost a truism, when matched against practice, it is often the basic cause of failure in many efforts."

Sherburne will arrive at AAAS headquarters in mid-March to launch the new program. He will be aided by the AAAS Committee on Public Understanding of Science, which is chaired by Warren Weaver of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation. Members include Willard Bascom of the National Academy of Sciences, Allen T. Bonnell of the Drexel Institute of Technology, Victor Cohn of the Minneapolis *Star and Tribune*, Laurence M. Gould of Carleton College, Richard D. Heffner of the CBS Television Network, Paul E. Klopsteg of Glenview, Ill. (ex officio Board representative), and Dael Wolfle of the AAAS (ex officio).

SSRS Incorporation Successful

The court in Doylestown, Pa., ruled last month in favor of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, granting a charter over the opposition of the American Legion. The SSRS applied for a charter in 1957, but the American Legion filed an opposing brief. The court appointed a Master of the Court to review the briefs for each side; the report of the Master was in the society's favor.

Yet the court overruled its own Master and decided against SSRS on the grounds that the wording of its constitution regarding the purpose of the society was vague. The constitution was rewritten to clarify the statement, but the American Legion also objected to the revised version. Months went by, then finally the court decided in favor of SSRS.

The decision makes it possible to apply for tax-exempt status. This status will help the society seek funds from various foundations with which to implement its concerns through various programs. The immediate reason for the incorporation proposal in 1957 was a desire on the part of SSRS to initiate a "Conference on the Constructive Uses of Science," a proposal which may now perhaps move ahead.

Science Foundation Establishes Social Sciences Division

The National Science Foundation has elevated its Office of Social Sciences to divisional status. Henry W. Riecken, on leave of absence from the University of Minnesota to head the office, has been appointed assistant director of the new Division of Social Sciences. (The other divisions of the foundation are the Division of Mathematical, Physical, and Engineering Sciences; the Division of Biological and Medical Sciences; and the Division of Scientific Personnel and Education.)

The change was made in recognition of the need for increased support of fundamental studies in the social sciences, particularly in view of diminishing assistance from other sources. Several large private foundations have either reduced their support of such basic research or have shifted the emphasis of their support in this field to applied research. The National Science Foundation is the major agency of government supporting basic re-

search in the history and philosophy of science, in large areas of anthropology, sociology, and social psychology, and in areas of economics which lend themselves to scientific treatment.

Foundation director Alan T. Waterman pointed out: "The magnitude of the need is indicated by noting that for the past two years the funds granted for support of the social sciences have been only about one-fifth of the funds requested in the form of proposals. The foundation's action indicates its appreciation and recognition of the importance and quality of scientific research in the social sciences and its belief in the sustained growth of these fields."

Division To Have Four Programs

The new division will organize its support of basic research in the social sciences under four programs: (i) anthropological sciences, including ethnology, archeology, linguistics, and physical anthropology; (ii) economic sciences, including econometrics, economic and social geography, the economics of research and innovation, and general mathematical economics; (iii) sociological sciences, including demography, social psychology, psycholinguistics, and the sociology of science; and (iv) a program supporting basic research in the history and philosophy of science.

In addition to achieving a more adequate level of support for the best proposals than has been possible heretofore, the foundation hopes to assist "coherent areas" of social science research. Several requests have been received by the foundation for interdisciplinary basic research aimed at understanding complicated phenomena, such as the structure and acquisition of language; the economic behavior of units within our social system, from the individual to more complex units such as households, firms, and governmental units; and the behavior of social systems and social processes themselves. These requests indicate some of the current frontiers of social science research where rewarding progress may be expected.

Rapid Budget Increase

When the Office of Social Sciences was created in 1958, the annual budget was \$850,000, dispersed among 49 grants. The present budget (fiscal year 1961) is \$3.4 million; this should provide about 130 grants.