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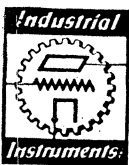
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Letters

Cost of Scholarly Books

Steven Ross's letter in *Science* [132, 835 (23 Sept. 1960)] rightly points out the high cost of scientific books. Yet many who cannot afford to buy would borrow, if they knew where. College students with access to good libraries are largely but not entirely free of this problem, but others find it pernicious.

The obvious answer is the public libraries, but even the best of these will have a skimpy representation in many fields. Probably this is inevitable in a local system, but why can't a large, national collection be built and maintained? This would not be an archive but a supplement to local libraries unable to meet specific requests. As Ross says, "to read is to learn"; such a project would certainly help spread scientific knowledge.

WOLFGANG WIEMER

B. S. Coler Hospital,
Welfare Island, New York, New York

Your recently published plea by S. E. Ross regarding the need for cheaper books prompts me to voice a related pet peeve. As a practicing clinician my mail is clogged with innumerable pieces of junk mail from drug concerns. Most of this is no doubt conceived, printed, and distributed at great cost. Yet a brief, admittedly statistically invalid, survey of my colleagues reveals that almost none of this material is ever opened, much less read. If it is opened it is only to identify it for what it is—an ad proposing that some company's new muscle relaxant, tranquilizer, or antibiotic is superior to its competitors' chemically identical product.

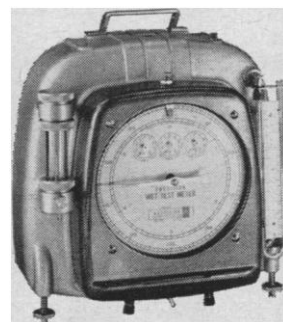
The distressing part of this is the fate of all that costly writing and printing—to wind up unseen in a trash can. Yet other printed matter, directed at the same scholar, is out of reach because of the cost of printing technical books. How much more practical, then, to direct the trash-can advertising money into subsidizing scholarly books. Perhaps only the dust cover could be bought for advertising at the start. Less costly printing and paper would help too.

There is, no doubt, a hard conservative core in the publishing industry which holds a book to be sacred and not to be contaminated by advertising. Somehow there is no objection to advertising in periodicals, and indeed *Science* itself would quite probably not be published if it were not for advertising. Small, highly specialized periodicals could certainly not be produced without advertising. Why, then, the difference between the periodical and the textbook?

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W. H. OLDENDORF
Veterans Administration Center,
Los Angeles, California

Food and Flavor

Concerning the report on radiation flavor by M. P. Drake, B. J. Kroll, and F. J. Pilgrim [*Science* 132, 1394 (11 Nov. 1960)], may I suggest that the "representative tasting panel" whose responses might enable us to foretell something about "consumer acceptance" be augmented by such invaluable members as a cat and a rook (or any other member of the raven family). In my experience these animals, if copiously supplied with food and given an *embarras de choix*, turn into finical connoisseurs. And, whatever their prejudices may be, there can be no question of partiality against radiation.

Advanced efforts in food technology remind one that ours is a period of transition from mass-produced, mass-distributed, and prefabricated foods toward worse to come. Would it perhaps be desirable, for the benefit of later generations of scientists bound to take an interest in the nature of foods so often referred to in documents of all times up to the present, to stow away a representative selection from all over the world in some remote corner of the Antarctic?

H. GLOOR
Department of Genetics, University of
Leiden, Leiden, Netherlands

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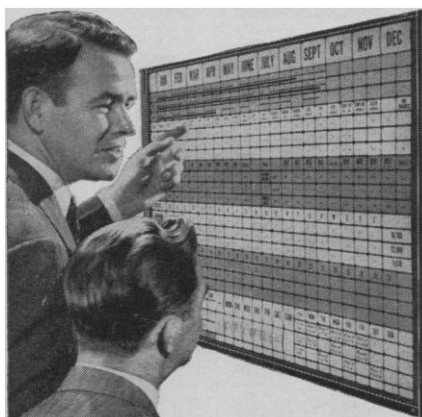
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The Future of "American Men of Science"

American Men of Science has been published as a biographical directory since 1906. As editor, I have carried on its publication for the last 35 years.

During this period the directory has never had financial help in the form of a grant, though it is a marginal publication insofar as profits are concerned. In 1948, after World War II, prices spiraled, making it necessary to ask those included to help make ends meet. The results were gratifying, and through such contributions publication of *American Men of Science* was continued.

I find it desirable to again approach those included for additional funds. The price of the four volumes that cover the physical and biological sciences is high for an individual; after test mailings of the A-E volume, the number of