

of reprints, these are usually on subjects in which they are more than casually interested, and the reprints stand a good chance of being quoted or referenced in *their* articles. . . .

JOHN A. BLAZER

Psychology, P.O. Box 734,
Bristol, Virginia

Letters

Reprint System Debated

We take vigorous exception to the opinions expressed by Hofmann and others (Letters, 4 Dec. 1964, p. 1251) concerning distribution of reprints.

First, in most cases the costs of publication are either covered by grants, which support the majority of scientific investigators in this country today, or are met by the employer institutions, especially for those of us who are in government or industrial research. This being the case, there is little point in declaiming against the cost of reprints as though they were financed from the scientist's own pocket. Furthermore, many journals routinely charge a per-page publication fee which includes the cost of a reasonable number of reprints. We see no reason why the journal or some distributing agency should make an additional profit by sale of single reprints to individuals.

Secondly, reprints must be ordered in advance and are printed at the same time as the journal itself. The system recommended by Hofmann *et al.* would require that the publisher store a great many plates from back issues, since demand for individual papers cannot be foreseen. To attempt to reproduce reprints by photo-offset or some other photocopying system, in order to avoid plate storage, would scarcely operate to reduce the cost of reprints.

A cost of even a few cents a page would work a hardship upon a great many scientists who constantly refer to a large number of scientific articles in their work, if they were required to buy each reprint with personal funds. Even if they could purchase reprints with grant or institutional funds, the time they or their secretaries—to say nothing of the accounting offices involved—spent in such purchasing procedures would far exceed the few moments required to send out a few reprints upon occasion. It is very unlikely that these moments de-

tract to any extent from scientific productivity.

Lastly, we think it is highly improbable that more than a small percentage of persons who mail reprint-request cards are "reprint collectors." In our own institutions there are certainly fewer than 10 percent who would even consider taking the time for this. And most scientific investigators who have a real need for a specific reprint do not have the time to write or dictate letters detailing why they desire it.

We believe the main point concerning reprints is the rapid dissemination of information to the people most concerned. This is appropriately handled by the system of sending reprints upon request, a system which, in addition, acquaints an author with the names of others interested in his field. In our own experience profitable correspondence and exchange of papers have resulted from this system. Any procedure which renders this exchange more cumbersome or costly by inserting middlemen is to be avoided. What began as "a matter of courtesy in a small group of scholars" many years ago is an effective as well as time-honored means of interchange within the scientific community today.

GEORGE V. PICKWELL

U.S. Navy Electronics Laboratory,
San Diego, California

EVERETT DOUGLAS

Scripps Institution of Oceanography,
La Jolla, California

. . . Many authors gladly assume the responsibility of purchasing and distributing reprints, for they wish to circulate their work as they think best. . . . The personal pride an author feels on reading requests for an article is often all the compensation he receives for his work. . . . For the publisher to assume this responsibility would be to remove from the author the fruit of his labors. . . .

While it is true that many professional persons keep voluminous files

I heartily endorse the proposal of Hofmann *et al.* In addition to the advantages mentioned in their letter, the distribution of reprints by the publisher or his agents might guarantee that reprints will always be available on request and so do away with "Sorry, reprints exhausted" cards, which many courteous scientists take the trouble to send out.

J. SRI RAM

University of Michigan, Ann Arbor

As a footnote to the letter of Hofmann *et al.*, I might add that the present arrangement for procuring reprints is also time-consuming and irritating to the one requesting the reprints. Generally, if you do not write for a reprint immediately after the journal appears, the requests go unanswered or ignored. This makes it necessary to keep records, and, if the reprints requested are not forthcoming in a month or so, to return to the journals and arrange to have photocopies made, thus doubling the invested time.

A stamp plan is already in operation for obtaining reprints from one journal, *Biochimica et Biophysica Acta*. I hope that other journals will adopt similar plans.

MICHAEL R. CUMMINGS

Northwestern University,
Evanston, Illinois

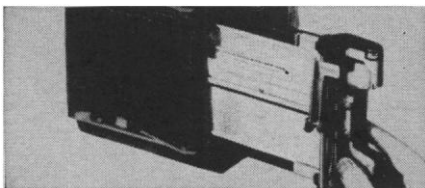
. . . In addition to the abuses cited there are two that I find particularly annoying. One is the request, probably in response to a publisher's advertisement, for a reprint of an article that has not yet been published. Clearly the interest may be only in the title of the article. The second, and possibly more serious, abuse is a related one. In this instance the requester obviously has scanned a periodical like *Current Contents* and has checked the titles that sound appealing; a secretary does the rest. If a rubber stamp signature is available, the requester may never read the request *or* the reprint. . . .

LESTER GOLDSTEIN

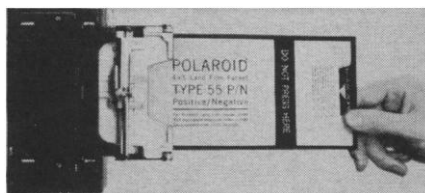
University of Pennsylvania,
Philadelphia

How Polaroid 4x5 Land film gives you both negative and positive in 20 seconds outside the darkroom.

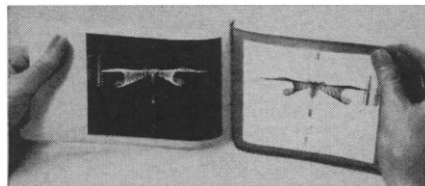
It's this simple to get both negative and positive without using the darkroom. Time required: 20 seconds.



Put a Polaroid 4 x 5 Land Film Holder in any camera that has a Graphic, Graflok or similar back.



Insert a Type 55 P/N film packet into the holder, and expose as you would with any panchromatic film rated at A.S.A. 50.



20 seconds later you have a fully developed, fine grain negative and a positive that matches the negative in every respect. Positive and negative develop in their own packet outside the camera, outside the darkroom. The negative needs only to be washed and dried to be ready to print or enlarge. Resolution is better than 150 lines per mm.

Type 55 P/N film is one of four special Polaroid Land films for 4 x 5 photography.

Type 52 film produces a virtually grainless paper print in 10 seconds. It has an A.S.A. rating of 400 and is ideal for general purpose 4 x 5 photography.

Type 57 film has an A.S.A. rating of 3200 for use in extremely low light conditions. It also produces a finished print in 10 seconds.

New Type 58 Polacolor 4 x 5 film is now available. It produces a full-color print just 60 seconds after exposure. The colors are rich and beautiful and skin tones are especially accurate. Speed is 75 A.S.A.

The Polaroid 4 x 5 Land system gives your camera more versatility, opens up new opportunities for you in 4 x 5 photography.

"POLAROID" AND "POLACOLOR"®

The proposal that reprints should be purchased directly from the publisher seems to us an excellent one. Motivated by the same considerations as the authors of that proposal, we have put an alternative scheme into practice. The reprint requester is sent by return mail a mimeographed form letter, with a request form which he fills out and returns:

Dear Dr. _____:

We (have received) (expect to receive) your request for our publication entitled _____ reference _____

Because we are swamped with requests for reprints of this paper, and have only a limited supply of reprints available, we must restrict the number of requests that we honor. We enclose therefore a form for you to fill out, in the hope that the inconvenience it causes you will be more than compensated for by a more equitable distribution of reprints than we have, heretofore, achieved.

APPLICATION FOR REPRINTS

(Please use block letters)

(I) (We) wish to apply for _____ copies of your reprint

entitled _____

and published in _____

on (date) _____

Use to which reprint will be put (personal use, reprint library, teaching, etc.) _____

Applicant's major field of interest _____

Full academic title _____

Faculty: tenure _____; nontenure _____

Scientist: full time _____; part time _____

Student: degree sought _____; date degree expected _____

Name of university or institute _____

Research supported by _____

Annual budget: \$0-\$10,000 _____; \$10,000-

\$50,000 _____; \$50,000-\$200,000 _____;

over \$200,000 _____

List your three most recent publications:

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

Have we received reprints of these? (No or yes)

1 _____ 2 _____ 3 _____

Date _____ Signature _____

The system has already had a salutary effect upon our annual expenditure for reprints.

D. H. HUBEL, T. N. WIESEL

J. Y. C. CHEN, J. S. TOBIE

J. TUCKERMAN, M. F. C. CRICK

A. GOLDBERG, L. RICHARDSON

M. COOPER, W. T. THACK

H. H. FUNKENSTEIN, S. BLAU

Neurophysiology Laboratory,

Harvard Medical School,

Boston 15, Massachusetts

As a form of unselfish, preeminently useful international communication, reprint exchange has few parallels. Commercializing it would benefit few, not even publishers, and would hurt nearly everyone. Aside from the resulting dehumanization, increase in trouble and costs (a check for a 20-cent reprint adds 50 percent to the price), and dampening of the spirit of cooperation, commercialization would hurt those who need reprints most but can afford them least—young graduate students, scientists in areas poorly served by literature sources, and especially scientists in countries where payment problems would greatly restrict the receipt of needed reprints. . . .

FRANK T. MANHEIM

U.S. Geological Survey,
Woods Hole, Massachusetts

Meetings: Do's and Don'ts

The views expressed by Page ("The globe trotters," 20 Nov. 1964, p. 1001) and Wolstenholme ("Obese degeneration of scientific congresses," 16 Sept. 1964, p. 1337) are shared by many scientists. Having attended scientific meetings since 1930, I have noticed their growth in size and their decline in usefulness as a source of information, as a forum for the free exchange of ideas, and as a source of new acquaintances. Prior to World War II, scientific and technological meetings were windows through which one was privileged to view the research and engineering activities of others. Today, not only is the view obscured by the large attendance but also the scene, if one is so fortunate as to get a peek through the window, is identical to that of a similar meeting 6 months or so earlier. It is the purpose of this letter to call attention to one scientific meeting which was planned to stimulate the intellectual curiosity of the scientists and which was a forum at which the scientists had ample opportunities to subject their ideas to critical reviews. This was the Third International Conference on Atmospheric and Space Electricity, held in Montreux, Switzerland, in May 1963.

As chairman, I had no constraints imposed on me. I was given complete freedom to formulate the program and to organize the meeting. Letters were dispatched to all the scientists active in the discipline, inviting them to define what, in their views, were the im-