

In the last two or three years, the climate for sociological research seems to have improved, partly in step with the social changes taking place in the South, and projects on race relations, migration off the farm, or the social mobility of the poor are now approved without question. "I think we have greater opportunities to do work without being impeded or suppressed," says one official intimate with the history of USDA sociological research.

With the passing of the rural development act last year, the USDA has for the first time been given formal responsibility for the welfare of rural people. Little else seems to have been

accomplished. The ERS has been reorganized by its new administrator, but neither the agency nor its division of human resources (now transferred to the Rural Development Service) has received any extra support to speak of. The division holds the USDA's major concentration of in-house sociology—five sociologists and three political scientists. In the whole of the CSRS, there is at present one sociologist to review, coordinate, and direct all sociological work supported by federal funds in the 50 states. Since 1971, Congress has earmarked an annual \$3 million for rural development, but whether or not because it has to be spread so thin

under the formula system, the new largesse seems to have little impact yet on departments of rural sociology.

Social scientists, including those on the Hobbs and Hathaway panels, are not likely to underestimate the potential value of their subject for policy-makers, nor is it clear to what extent social scientists could have helped to soften the impact of the agricultural revolution on rural peoples. But whatever opportunities there may have been, Congress and the USDA and the SAES directors seem to have designed a system that has passed most of them up, and continues to do so.

—NICHOLAS WADE

Cancer News: Cancer Society Makes It with Style

A few weeks ago, the American Cancer Society (ACS) launched its annual fund-raising drive with a seminar for science writers which generated some 300 news stories about progress against cancer. That is a lot of news.

Although the writers' seminar and the fund-raising campaign are not formally tied together, there is no doubt that the timing that links them is deliberate. The ACS, which has a masterful public relations operation, goes on the assumption that donations will be highest if people are exposed to good news about cancer shortly before a society volunteer comes knocking at the door. The idea is to let the public know that there is hope that cancer can be cured.

Whether the spring surfeit of news about cancer actually prompts more people to give, or give more, is moot. Alan C. Davis, ACS vice president and director of the seminar, says there has never been a good analysis of the situation. Certainly, many donors would contribute whether they were inundated by news stories or not. Nevertheless, there is a general feeling among cancer society officials that the news from the seminar contributes to the success of the campaign and that the \$20,000 to \$25,000 that the society spends on the meeting is a worthwhile

investment. This year, the ACS hopes to raise \$85 million—most of it by the beginning of summer—and there is no reason to think that it will fail. Someone has suggested that the ACS's slogan should be "Give 'til it cures." The society's rallying cry for now is "We want to wipe out cancer in your lifetime."

Over the years, the ACS writers' seminar, whose origins go back to 1949, has become quite an established—and marginally controversial—institution that attracts a wide range of journalists and scientists, each coming for a variety of reasons. There is no science meeting like it.

The Promise of News

In a preseminar memo to reporters this year, Davis observed that "Public interest and governmental action against this disease—one of mankind's most relentless enemies—has experienced unprecedented growth during the past three years." Mentioning work in immunology, chemotherapy, and molecular biology, he promised that "Progress in all of these areas will be presented by the scientists who are making this progress. Exciting developments are ready for reporting. The findings are fresh, new, and significant." Sixty-eight writers showed up

to hear about them from the 55 scientists whom Davis invited to the meeting at Rio Rico Inn in Nogales, Arizona.

Davis, who in addition to running the seminar handles some of the society's business in Washington, including liaison with the National Cancer Institute (NCI), spends months tracking down investigators to ask to participate. The process officially begins in the fall, when letters go out to all past participants (there are about 600 alumni) asking them to recommend persons for the next meeting. Davis looks for scientists whose work, in either basic or clinical research, is relatively new. But by and large, he is not looking for things that have never been reported anywhere else. "People usually have reported their findings before the seminar," Davis says, "even if only at a very small meeting of some sort. I think that kind of peer review provides a safety valve for us. We don't want weirdo stuff."

According to Davis, in the last few years scientists have been increasingly willing to come to the seminar and to suggest persons who might be good participants. Five years ago, he recalls, only 50 past participants bothered answering the letter asking them for ideas. This year, more than 150 answered.

In addition to soliciting ideas by mail, Davis himself travels extensively throughout the year, attending meetings, ranging from the select Gordon conference on cancer to the mammoth gathering of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology, and scouring university campuses. There is nothing haphazard about the way this seminar is put together.

As always, the cast of characters at

this year's seminar was heterogeneous. Four Nobel laureates* were on hand to lend an added touch of prestige to the scientific delegation, which included many of the country's most established cancer researchers, as well as a contingent of young investigators. Most of them spoke directly about cancer research, although many managed to work a plug for training grants in among their comments about lymphocytes or chemotherapeutic agents. A few spoke more specifically about policy.

Frank J. Rauscher, Jr., director of the cancer institute, came to meet the press and talk about the national cancer program. Former assistant secretary of health Merlin K. DuVal, who is now vice president for medical affairs at the University of Arizona at Tucson, dropped by in a suede, fringed cowboy jacket to make a few remarks about Washington politics and the status of deans. (He thinks that deans will recoup some of their old authority within medical schools as individual researchers find their once sizable grants dwindling away and, with them, the clout that came with having all that money.) And, to add an international flavor to the proceedings, there was Han Suyin of Hong Kong, the Chinese physician famous for her novels, particularly for *A Many Splendored Thing*. Clad in an exquisite fur coat, Dr. Han talked about the good that Chairman Mao has done for the health of the citizens of the People's Republic of China and emphasized that the conception many persons have of China as a welfare state is wrong. "The individual contributes to his commune and it takes care of him," she said. "We're too poor to be a welfare state."

The reporters present were as diverse a crew as the scientists, representing papers of all sizes from all parts of the United States and Canada. The *New York Times* and the *Washington Post* sent representatives. So did *Newsweek* and the *Wall Street Journal*. A reporter for the Topeka (Kans.) *Capital Journal* came, as did one for the *Wichita Eagle-Beacon*. Reporters for several medical magazines were there. The *National Enquirer*, which is trying to change its image as a scandal sheet, sent a writer. There were a smattering of television and radio people. Most of them wrote about achievements in the crusade against cancer.

* Robert Holley, Salk Institute; Arthur Kornberg, Stanford Medical Center; Salvador E. Luria, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Earl Sutherland, Vanderbilt University.

Throughout the years, the cancer society has been charged with "managing the news" and "using the press" by holding its seminar at the same time that the fund-raising drive begins. Inevitably, some journalist brings it up each year, and, from time to time, a couple of writers stay home in protest. But they usually show up again the next year. Apparently, the advantages the seminar offers attract them back.

From a writer's point of view, those advantages are considerable. Many of the reporters who turn up at the seminar year after year travel very little the rest of the time. For some, the ACS meeting is the only thing they cover out of their home territory all year, and, therefore, the first-hand exposure they get to the scientists present is of considerable value. Even for the troupe of more sophisticated national science writers, who are likely to hit as many meetings a year as most scientists, the opportunity the seminar provides for people to just sit and talk with each other at length is invaluable.

The exposure the writers get to a range of research projects is also worthwhile. Although it by no means covers

every aspect of cancer research, the material presented at the seminar is carefully selected to touch a number of bases. The society seems to have two things in mind. Certainly, its own interests are not forgotten, and so every effort is made to provide a choice of stories to fit every writer's editorial needs. Thus, the scientific presentations ranged from a discussion by Arthur Kornberg about RNA as a primer for DNA synthesis to a series of papers by physicians from St. Jude's Hospital in Memphis about what can be done right now to treat, and sometimes cure, childhood cancers.

On the other hand, the society is genuinely interested in educating the press and goes to some effort to do what it can to help reporters fully understand the science that is presented. An innovation at the seminar this year that proved useful to most writers was what Davis billed as a "teaching and briefing" session. Before each panel began, its chairman met with anyone who cared to come and went over the material that would be coming up, trying to show where work was inter-related and to put things in perspective.

Academy Response to Shockley

As has been his custom over the past 7 years, William B. Shockley asked the National Academy of Sciences at its April meeting to review his hypotheses about race, genetics, and IQ.

Instead of tabling the motion, as in past years, the academy sought to give Shockley a specific answer, in the form of a resolution, that would deal finally with the issue—at least in its present form.

In the preamble to the resolution, the academy council said it "doubts the wisdom of attempting to select one field" for study among the many that "impinge strongly on important social and economic issues of our times. . . ." The resolution was as follows:

"The National Academy of Sciences acknowledges Mr. Shockley's having brought to its attention the inquiry in which he is currently engaged, and encourages him and others engaged in such efforts to follow the normal scientific procedures of publication so that their results may be subjected to the usual peer review and accorded the scientific impact afforded by such publication."

Shockley appears to feel undeterred by the resolution which he says "simply does not face the issues that I raised." He would not say whether he intends to press his cause at next year's NAS meeting, but he does plan to investigate whether the NAS action breaks with the academy's usual policies in dealing with study proposals.

In an unrelated action, the council eliminated from its constitution the requirement that time be set aside for contributed papers. The number of papers given dwindled to nine this year, and attendance has become microscopic. An academy spokesman explained that the paper-giving was a vestige of the old days when the academy provided a forum not available elsewhere.—C.H.

One of the things that makes the cancer society seminar work is its painstakingly chosen location. It alternates between the East and West coasts but is always held at a resort in a warm climate, near enough to a big city to make flying in and out reasonable, without being so close to town that participants can easily disperse. The Rio Rico Inn, atop a mesa in the desert 60 minutes from Tucson, was ideal in that regard. Nearby Nogales, Mexico, with three restaurants of reasonable caliber, attracted most of the scientists and reporters evenings. Back at the inn, the pool would have been a central meeting place were the weather not so unseasonably cold.

The point is, of course, that the meeting location is deliberately chosen to be enticing and to provide an atmosphere that encourages everyone to stay around and do things together. As an added guarantee that there will be ample time for casual conversation, Davis asks the scientists to stay for at least two nights. No one is asked to just speak and run. And very few do.

Cost is another factor in selecting the seminar site. To keep within its \$25,000 limit, the society, which pays all of the expenses for the scientists as well as the basic costs of setting up the meeting, bargains with innkeepers for low-cost rooms and, so far, has always been able to get them. The society, or individual local ACS chapters, also picks up the tab for a few of the reporters who come, to the general disapproval of most press corps members who firmly believe that one should not take money from the same people one is writing about.

The seminars began life as a traveling road show a quarter of a century ago, when Patrick McGrady, who was science editor of the ACS for years, asked a handful of reporters to join him for a week as he made the rounds of researchers who were working on ACS grants. The first tour, McGrady recalls, was launched by philanthropist Mary Lasker, who threw a party at her New York townhouse for the press before they set off on a rail journey to laboratories on the East Coast. (Mrs. Lasker allegedly is still a patron of the seminar, in that she pays for the "happy hour" that marks the end of each working day. Society officers admit that cocktails are provided by a "generous donor" but decline to say who it is.) By the time the tours were 10 years old, a considerably larger

corps of reporters was joining McGrady. The last tour covered 21 institutions in 21 days and, McGrady says, flattened everyone. "By the end, people were dropping like flies, arranging transportation was impossible, and we knew that the annual tour would have to be discontinued." The next year, the ACS held its first sit-down seminar in Excelsior Springs, Missouri, at an old spa at which, according to people who were there, the average age of the other guests was 90.

As might be expected, no seminar goes by without eliciting its share of gripes. Reporters complain that there are no good stories, but that is traditional. Scientists complain that some of their colleagues are saying things to the press that they would never say to a scientific audience and maintain that there is not enough peer review at the seminar. As one man put it a couple of weeks after the event, "After listening to some of my 'colleagues' talk to some of the reporters, I'm never going to believe anyone who tells me he was misquoted if the press attributes some exaggerated claim to him." Then he added, "Of course, I'm not saying that this applies to everyone, but it was clear to me that being surrounded by the press goes to some people's head."

Most scientists, coming away from a seminar for the first time, feel that they have been as educated in the ways of the news business as the reporters have been in the ways of science. And, occasionally, in what the ACS considers one of the nicest spin offs of the meeting, the scientists are educated by each other. Virologist George Todaro commented that he learned a lot about fields unrelated to his own by listening to other scientists' presentations on topics that he would be unlikely to spend time on at regular scientific meetings. Furthermore, the seminar is sometimes the occasion at which two investigators meet for the first time, talk, and discover that there are experiments they would like to do together. This year, that happened at least four times.

Other voluntary organizations, and even the Food and Drug Administration, have thought about trying to imitate the cancer society's writers' seminar, and a couple have tried. But no one has ever done it as well and professionally from the standpoint of a successful venture in public relations that has, for whatever its faults, something to offer everybody.

—BARBARA J. CULLITON

APPOINTMENTS

Glenwood L. Creech, vice president for university relations, University of Kentucky, to president, Florida Atlantic University. . . . **Robert G. Sachs**, director, Enrico Fermi Institute, University of Chicago, to director, Argonne National Laboratory. . . . **Carlo L. Golino**, vice chancellor, University of California, Riverside, to chancellor, University of Massachusetts, Boston. . . . **Ray E. Bolz**, dean, School of Engineering, Case Western Reserve University, to vice president, Worcester Polytechnic Institute. . . . **Frederick J. Bonte**, chairman, radiology department, University of Texas Southwestern Medical School, to dean of the medical school. . . . **Lyle G. Wilcox**, associate dean, College of Engineering, Clemson University, to dean of the college. . . . **Donald G. Herzberg**, executive director, Eagleton Institute of Politics, Rutgers University, to dean, Graduate School, Georgetown University. . . . **Joseph L. Schwalje**, professor of mechanical engineering, Pratt Institute, to dean, School of Engineering at the institute. . . . **Andrew D. Dixon**, associate dean for research, School of Dentistry, University of North Carolina, to dean, School of Dentistry, University of California, Los Angeles. . . . **Robert Kaye**, deputy physician-in-chief, Children's Hospital of Philadelphia, to chairman, pediatrics department, Hahnemann Medical College and Hospital. . . . **James B. Sow, Jr.**, member, interdepartmental institute for neurological sciences, University of Pennsylvania Medical School, to chairman, otorhinolaryngology and human communication department at the medical school.

Erratum: In the article "Isospin in nuclei" by D. Robson [179, 133 (1973)], several incorrect illustrations were included in Fig. 1. The errors include the following: row a, illustration 5; row b, the ${}^6_3\text{Li}$ and ${}^6_4\text{Be}$ illustrations; and row c, the ${}^6_2\text{He}$ illustration. A corrected version of Fig. 1 is shown below.

