

## AAAS Popularization of Science Delegation Visits China

A popularization of science delegation toured China 15–30 May 1980, as a continuation of the informal agreement reached by the AAAS Board of Directors with the China Association for Science and Technology (CAST) during the Board's visit to the People's Republic of China (PRC) in 1978 (*Science* **203**, 505–515, 9 February 1979). The exchange was at the request of CAST, which sent a return delegation to tour the United States last month (15–30 June).

The AAAS delegation was headed by Jeffrey Kirsch, director of the Science Center, KPBS, San Diego, and a member of the AAAS Committee on the Public Understanding of Science. The other members of the delegation were Alexander Morin, director of the Office of Science and Society, the National Science Foundation; Alan Ternes, editor of *Natural History*, the American Museum of Natural History; and Kathryn Wolff, managing editor, AAAS Publications Office.

The delegation had three principal areas of interest to explore in the PRC. These were popular science publications; broadcast media; and museums, exhibits, and any other means of reaching the vast population of China with information about modern scientific developments. On arriving, the delegation found that CAST had prepared a substantial itinerary. The first week was spent in Beijing, where a tight schedule permitted the delegation to get at least some information about each of its principal concerns.

Tours and discussions were arranged which took the delegation to the Beijing Nature Museum, the Planetarium, and the Palace Museum; to the Beijing Man site at Zhou Kou Dian and to a major seismological observatory; to the Beijing Children's Palace, the Xinhua Bookstore, and the China Central Television Station; and to the Beijing Worker's Technological Exchange Center.

The second week was spent in Shanghai, Hangzhou, and Guangzhou. In these cities also the delegation visited centers operated by city and district divisions of CAST; visited museums and botanical gardens; TV and radio stations; "sparetime" universities; and children's palaces—facilities which provide after school and vacation time educational and cultural activities—including one at Chong Ming, an island commune in the

Yangtze River; bookstores; a printing plant; other production facilities; and street exhibits and art exhibits dealing with scientific themes.

Numerous discussions were held with editors and writers associated with popular science publications aimed at readers of all ages and degrees of interest and knowledge of science; with science television producers; with directors, science teachers, and other staff at spare-time educational institutions for both children and adults; and with national and local officials of CAST, its science popularization department, and its department of international affairs.

The pace was brisk and the information provided rapidly assumed flood-level proportions. The overall impression of the delegation was one of tremendous interest in science and technology at all levels in China, coupled with an awareness of deficits and a determination to catch up on all fronts. The primary reasons given were the substantial need to develop a technologically sophisticated population to accomplish the national goal of the Four Modernizations (agriculture, industry, defense, and science and technology) and the pressing need to make up in the shortest possible time for the science deficit incurred in the years of the Cultural Revolution when the higher educational system was in disarray. Special concern was expressed in nearly every meeting for the "lost generation" of those years. The hope was also expressed during some of the discussions that by spreading science information as widely as possible some of the social difficulties resulting from the de-

veloping rural/urban differentiation and the technological division of labor could be reduced.

The delegation was warmly received in each of the cities visited and left the PRC with the feeling that, although both trained personnel and money—particularly foreign exchange funds—are in very short supply, there is much enthusiasm and a firm commitment to raising the level of scientific knowledge throughout China. Continuing scientific exchanges were cited as an essential factor in achieving that goal.

If the resources can be found to match the enthusiasm of the science popularizers which the AAAS delegation met, China will certainly make rapid progress toward producing a substantial group of individuals with enough training to participate in the modernization of industry and agriculture. Whether it will succeed in achieving scientific literacy in that quarter of the world's population that calls the PRC home remains, in the minds of the delegation at least, an open question.

KATHRYN WOLFF  
*Publications Office*

## 1980 Annual SWARM Meeting Held In Las Vegas

The Southwestern and Rocky Mountain Division (SWARM) of the AAAS held its 56th annual meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada, 9–12 April. Henry J. Shine, Texas Tech University, presided and delivered the presidential address, "Reflections on Research."

A feature of the meeting was the symposium on "Origin and Evolution of North American Deserts," sponsored by the Committee on Desert and Arid Zone Research (CODAZR). "Climate Forecasting, Consequences, and Responsibilities," was the subject of the 47th John Wesley Powell Annual Memorial Lecture, presented by Michael H. Glantz, National Center for Atmospheric Research.

Approximately 65 student papers were presented, with \$50 awards being made for the best in each of the seven sections of the program. Poster sessions, arranged by Lora Shields, Navajo Community College, were an integral part of the meeting. The SWARM meeting was held jointly with the Arizona-Nevada Academy of Science.

Max Dunford, New Mexico State University, Las Cruces, was chosen presi-

### **Marine Technology Meeting Planned**

The AAAS will be a participating organization in the annual meeting of the Marine Technology Society.

"The Decade of the Oceans" will be the theme for the conference and exhibit 6–8 October 1980 at the Shoreham Hotel in Washington, D.C. Program topics will include subjects such as coastal zone management, marine biology, ocean energy, geology and geophysics, undersea physics, and sea-floor engineering.

For further details write to Marine Technology 80, MTS, Suite 412, 1730 M Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20036.