
Looking Back and Looking Ahead as We Greet a New Year And *The Scientist's* 100th Issue

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As we ring in the New Year with best wishes to all our readers, *The Scientist's* staff has special cause for celebration: This is our 100th issue—and it marks the entry into our fifth year of publishing.

When *The Scientist* was launched in September 1986, the idea of a newspaper for scientists had been brewing in my mind for more than 25 years. In the post-Sputnik era, scientists and policymakers became aware of the need to facilitate communication across established disciplines, and it was my intention to meet that need. At the time, the cognitive aspects of research were adequately reported—as they are today—in large-circulation science magazines and primary research journals. But none of these publications, in my view, dealt in appropriate depth with the science community's bread-and-butter career concerns. Although I frequently used *Current Contents* and the *Science Citation Index* as a vehicle to explore such nontechnical matters, the scientific community still lacked a publication fully devoted to them.

In the last four years, *The Scientist* has addressed that need, emphasizing that science is, at the core,

a human, social activity. We have carved our niche and grown to fill it by focusing on the people of science: the administrators, whistleblowers, entrepreneurs, and others; by identifying trends in compensation; by examining the science community's exploitation of foreign students, women, and racial minorities. We have praised the altruism of small and large foundations; we have questioned the self-righteousness of some bureaucrats.

Our 1990 news coverage demonstrated the breadth of our concerns. During the year, *The Scientist* described the United States budget deficit's threat to scientific research funding, exacerbated by a growing wariness on the part of private grantmakers to back research. We also tracked the controversial cases centering on research fraud, which threatens to jeopardize the scientific enterprise today; and we have consistently reported on the tentative progress of the Human Genome Project and its impact on the work of individual investigators. During 1990, we were heartened by the emergence of democracy in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and the vital role scientists have played in that epochal process.

Behind these issues, of course, stand influential human beings. Indeed, while successful science today is mostly the result of great collaborations, these cooperative efforts depend on the inspiration of individuals. Chemist Dennis P. Curran and his team, for example, have moved ahead our understanding of free radicals (April 30, page 22). Biochemist Abraham Abuchouski's work on the polyethylene glycol polymer could create a new industry (Oct. 1, page 1). And bioscientist Ivor Royston has demonstrated how the entrepreneurial spirit can work in the nonprofit arena (Dec. 10, page 1).

In the coming year, we will continue to report on the human drama in science. On page 1 of this issue, we present a roundup of views, based on interviews with dozens of the nation's leading scientists, that herald a near future promising to be

as challenging and eventful as the recent past. As the interviews revealed, limited public resources continue to worry many researchers, some of whom are particularly concerned about the federal government's emphasis on big projects. And we share the interviewees' concern that the U.S. is facing a shortage of qualified scientists. If our students cannot face the challenges of a science education and if the U.S. loses its interest in scientific inquiry, then we will be entering an era of tragic ignorance. We cannot trust that immigration of foreign scientists alone will continue to keep our labs busy.

As progress toward resolving these concerns is made—or stalled—in 1991, *The Scientist* will keep its readers informed of the issues facing the science community, and especially the unique role researchers can and must play in shaping them. ■