

## Report of the Committee on Publications for the Year ending June 30, 2002

The 2002 fiscal year was a good one for *American Scientist*. The Society's magazine was honored with three national awards; the magazine experienced a growth in newsstand sales and stable advertising revenues during a sharp downturn in the magazine industry; and a contract was signed to launch *American Scientist Online*.

### Honors

The Society of National Association Publications awards prizes for editorial and design excellence in its annual EXCEL Awards competition. This year *American Scientist* earned the top award-the Gold Award for General Excellence-in its category. The judges wrote that the magazine "stands out for its ability to transform highly complicated topics into engaging, readable editorial and graphics that can appeal to the specialized audience as well as laypeople." Two articles-"Health and Human Society" by Clyde Hertzman and "The Growing Threat of Biological Weapons" by Steven M. Block-received Gold and Bronze Awards, respectively, in the feature-article category.

### Operations

Under some pressure from a tight budget and the challenge of evaluating and negotiating the online project plan, the staff as usual produced an eclectic array of highly illustrated issues, including articles that attracted wide attention in the press and elsewhere. A few incremental changes were made, including the introduction of Philip and Phylis Morrison as Marginalia contributors, but largely the editorial staff remained focused on keeping up with changes in science and its interactions with the world.

The magazine's total circulation did not change significantly during the year, leveling out at an average of 91,000. Approximately 76 percent of the magazines are sent to members of Sigma Xi; 17 percent are purchased on the newsstand, and 7 percent go to nonmember subscribers. Our readers continue to be loyal; 80 percent have been reading *American Scientist* for 10 years or more.

There was no staff turnover during the fiscal year. External staff activities included workshops on scientific illustration given by Ms. Reid for the U.S. Naval Academy Chapter and at the Sigma Xi Annual Meeting. Editorial staff members Karin Jegalian and David Schneider both served as judges in Sigma Xi-supported student research competitions. Kate Miller, associate publisher, continues as a member of the Board of the Society for National Association Publications for her fourth and final year.

### Online Developments

It was an active year on the magazine's Web site, as visitors downloaded (by the tens of thousands) computing columns and "make your own universe" files. User sessions on the site totaled 252,322 in April 2002 (about 4 percent of which was traffic on non-magazine pages), about double the activity of a year earlier. Some 8,000 visitors come to the site each day. Work began late in the year on the creation of a text archive for low-bandwidth online access to magazine content, with funding from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation. This project will speed the launch of a new Web site, *American Scientist Online*, and help test a low-cost Sigma Xi membership model for scientists in developing countries.

At the Committee's meeting June 29, Ms. Reid reviewed the Board of Directors discussion and approval of a contract with 4Lane Digital, a subsidiary of The Lane Press (printer of the magazine), for the creation of the *American Scientist Online* site. The site will be built around a database of illustrated current and archival content from the magazine. The committee, which had endorsed the project in concept and recommended consideration by the Committee on Finances during the previous fiscal year, offered a variety of suggestions on the content, member services and business strategy of the new site.

### Finances

Subscription revenues increased to \$205,082 for the fiscal year, a 17 percent increase. Fiscal-year figures are not yet available for single-copy sales, because of the time it takes for sales reports to reach publishers, but calendar year 2001 was a record-setting year on the newsstand, with 98,479 copies of *American Scientist* sold. This was an increase of more than 10 percent over the previous year during a period when the rest of the industry experienced a 7 percent decline. The magazine is currently sold in every state in the U.S. and in 40 countries. It is now available in 98 percent of all Barnes & Noble bookstores and 92 percent of all Borders bookstores, as well as many others.

Throughout the industry, print advertising revenues dropped 20 percent during the fiscal year, owing to the strained economy. *American Scientist* was fortunate to experience a much smaller decline of less than 1 percent, with revenue totaling \$175,794 for the fiscal year. Toyota, the U.S. Army, book publishers and software companies were regular advertisers during fiscal year 2002. Royalty and permission revenues dropped slightly to \$24,324 as a contract with one database provider expired; however, a new contract for inclusion of *American Scientist* in the EBSCOhost database was signed that will increase that revenue stream by at least \$5,000 annually. The Committee encouraged Editor Rosalind Reid to negotiate a proposed agreement with four European magazines for the republication of *American Scientist* articles in translation.

At its meeting the Committee endorsed a plan to increase the newsstand price to \$4.95 per copy in the U.S. and \$5.95 in Canada.

Respectively submitted,

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