

GENERAL SCIENCE

Young Scientists Work

New year of learning-doing and scientific activity directed toward winning the war starts with school year for Science Club members.

► SIXTY thousand young scientists have gone back to work.

They are the members of Science Clubs of America beginning their new season of club activity now that schools have re-opened all over the country. Ranging from ten years through college age these 60,000 hard-working scientists-in-training are starting a new year of concentrated activity that will teach them science, serve as a valuable contribution to the winning of the war, and prepare them for major contribution to the reconstruction of the world when peace comes.

The membership in Science Clubs of America has increased 300% since this time last year. More than 2,500 clubs in all 48 states and also a few in Alaska, Canada, Canal Zone, Cuba, Hawaii, Portugal, Puerto Rico and Central and South America are now affiliated with Science Clubs of America.

The Third Annual Science Talent Search, sponsored by Science Clubs of America, and offering \$11,000 in Westinghouse Science Scholarships is now

under way. Entries must be completed by December 27. Over 15,000 high school seniors competed in a similar contest last year, and it is expected that more than that number will enter this third search for talented science students worthy of financial assistance for higher education.

In public, private and parochial schools, in colleges, in universities, in private homes, in Scout troops, in hospitals for cripples, in every kind of institution where young people can gather for work and study, there are Science Clubs putting in long hours learning about chemistry, physics, aeronautics, radio, bacteriology, horticulture, meteorology and dozens of other sciences. They work in school laboratories after school hours, in basement and attic workshops they devise for themselves, in abandoned stores, in old shops, anywhere they can find the space and equipment to give them a chance to carry on their study and experimenting.

The communities where these Science Clubs of America groups are organized

are becoming accustomed to seeing these eager boys and girls as they go about learning science by doing.

It is not enough for them to study about metals. They prefer to put on huge scrap drives and familiarize themselves with the many metals they have gathered when they sort the salvage, before turning it over to the authorities. They study biology from books, but they also plant Victory Gardens and learn to plant and prune and spray and cultivate. When the harvest is ready they learn the latest methods of canning, drying, salting and preserving. In these and many other ways they learn and at the same time show their neighborhoods new developments in science, for the keynote of the activities of Science Clubs of America is to learn science and learn, too, to apply it to useful purposes.

Already young scientists who have "graduated" from science clubs are proving how effective this training has been to them. In the armed services they become technicians with valuable basic essentials already learned; in war industries they are taking their places rapidly in responsible war jobs; and those fortunate enough to go on to college, university or technical school are in training for the research jobs that will keep this country in the forefront of science.

Major factor in the growing success of Science Clubs of America is the large number of adults who are willing to help youngsters get started in science club work. Often they are science teachers in schools, colleges, universities and technical schools. They are also parents, business men, professional scientists, Scout leaders, and so on, who are willing to give some of their time to encourage and direct the enormous energies and talents of the promising science-minded youngsters of the community. The satisfaction they receive from seeing the development of these talents and the

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successful accomplishments of the club members is reward beyond price for these adults.

To make the responsibilities of these adults (who are referred to as science club sponsors) easier, Science Clubs of America sends booklets, folders and materials of helps, aids and suggestions regularly to each club. There is no charge for this aid from headquarters. It not may makes direction of the club an easier matter for the sponsor but keeps each club acquainted with the activities of all clubs so that they can learn from one another in the true spirit of science.

There is no limit to the number of science clubs that can be formed in any locality. In areas where many are in existence they have exchange meetings and science congresses and conferences to demonstrate their experiments to one another and thus speed up their learning. Newspapers, industries, museums of science, colleges, etc., foster large numbers of science clubs and by helping these youngsters to achieve their goals are themselves making a major contribution to American science.

In many states where there are academies of science and similar groups, these bodies of professional scientists have taken over the responsibility of providing inspiration and assistance to the most promising of the science club members. This provides the youngsters help when they need it most and will in time profit those states by increasing the number of well-trained and competent scientists.

There is no charge for affiliation with Science Clubs of America. The administration of the organization is a contribution to science by Science Service.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1943

NAVAL SCIENCE

Landing Ship Opens Jaws To Let Out Fighting Men

See Front Cover

► THE NAVY calls them "one of the most startling types of ship the war has produced," although they are known officially as LST, Landing Ship—Tank.

They have been built in shipyards located on inland rivers and at Great Lakes ports. Now they are operating in the Atlantic, the Pacific and the Mediterranean. Some of the way stations have been Attu, Rendova, Sicily, Kiska, Munda and New Guinea.

The picture on the cover of this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is an official U. S. Navy photograph.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1943



Natural Inventions

► MAN'S invincible egotism is reflected in the names he gives to natural objects and structures which his own mechanical inventions chance to resemble. If someone mentions a pitcher-plant, or a hammerhead shark, or a shoebill stork, we all conjure up a vision of the fantastic creature at once, and think how aptly it was named—disregarding the fact that these things existed long before any human being had contrived a pitcher, or a hammer, or a shoe, or any other artifact; long before human beings were on the scene at all.

Fish and other sea creatures seem to have been especial victims of this tendency of man to play the part of a god and make things, not in his own image, but in the image of his handiwork. Thus we have such names as sawfish, swordfish, pipefish, filefish, ribbonfish, threadfish, swordtail, sailfish, gafftops' catfish, and a hundred others. Sometimes they are named not for their actual appearance but for the fancied resemblance of their activities to our own, as in the fiddler crab, angler-fish, archer-fish, drumfish. One such naming seems to be justified: inkfish. Men use the dark fluid secreted by this squid (which is not a real fish) for ink; its brown tint is known in the water-colorist's box by the mollusk's zoological name: *Sepia*.

Fish are not the only examples of this tendency to name natural things for artificial objects or activities. Plants, especially wildflowers, come in for a lot of it. Consider: bottle tree, barrel cactus, organ-pipe cactus, Indian paintbrush, Indian pipe, lady's slipper, Venus' fly-trap, Venus' mirror, Solomon's seal, Dutchman's breeches, trumpet-flower, pincushion flower, Spanish bayonet, silversword, swordgrass, sawgrass, chain

fern, shield fern, sword fern, cannon-ball tree, bellflower, screw palm, sword bean, knife bean, inkberry, telegraph plant.

Sometimes a shape will reflect itself in half-a-dozen names. There's a whole set of cups, for example: buttercup, creamcup, cupweed, leathercup, death-cup mushroom. Or a particular texture will sponsor several plants: silk-oak: satinwood, velvet-leaf.

In a few cases, the process has been reversed, and man acknowledges his debt. Such names may recognize merely chance or fanciful resemblances, such as a carpenter's horse or catheads on a ship or firedogs on the hearth or worm-gears in machinery. Or they may show a definite tendency for man to study the works of nature and profit thereby, as in gull-winged airplanes and beaver-tailed boats and caterpillar tractors. But such conscious honesty on our part is still rare.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1943

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Field Museum of Chicago Has Fiftieth Anniversary

► THE RAPIDLY growing youngster among the world's leading museums, the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago celebrated its fiftieth birthday on September 16.

"It is probable," says Orr Goodson, acting director, "that founder Marshall Field and those other civic-minded men associated with the museum's birth never quite hoped that the museum could in such a short space of time achieve the outstanding position it holds today—one of the four leading natural history museums of the world."

Among the older museums are the 190-year-old British Museum, the Smithsonian Institution and the American Museum of Natural History.

Science News Letter, October 16, 1943

MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY

Invaluable in reading any book that uses mathematics.

THE JAMES MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY,

the only such book now published, provides standard definitions of the terms and phrases from arithmetic through elementary differential equations; the technical terms ordinarily used in the applications of these subjects, and more advanced basic terms. Easy examples, many illustrations and all sorts of formulas are included. The appendix contains tables of weights and measures, a list of mathematical symbols and the tables ordinarily used in handbooks.

This dictionary is a great deal more than a collection of definitions. It explains, illustrates and correlates, stressing especially those operations that are hardest to understand. One reader has called it "Ten texts in one." Available in flexible or non-flexible binding, for \$3.00, from the Digest Press, Dept. 3-B, Van Nuys, California, or Science News Letter.