GENERAL SCIENCE

Science Talent Search On

Scholarships totaling $11,000 plus 40 all-expense trips to Washington to be awarded to outstanding high school seniors throughout the nation.

➤ RECRUITING for leadership in the army of scientists who have come to be America's greatest hope in peace and surest shield in war is actively under way again, with the formal announcement of the Seventh Annual Science Talent Search.

A Science Talent Search is a kind of academic hurdle-race—with each hurdle higher and harder to clear than the one before it.

To begin with, the contestant has to have a good school record behind him, for a full set of his grades, together with statements by his principal or the teachers who know most about him, go to the judges along with his examination papers and essay. While no student is barred from competing, as a practical matter only seniors who are well toward the tops of their classes are likely to qualify for the finals.

Each student must complete a three-hour science aptitude examination in his own school. This is designed primarily to demonstrate his ability to master new and unfamiliar matter, and to reason out correct conclusions from clearly stated though somewhat difficult facts, rather than to find out what he has already learned or memorized.

The contestant must submit an essay of about 1,000 words on "My Science Project." This is expected to be a report on a definite project in laboratory research or field study carried on independently by the student himself.

When the judges have these three things from each entrant—student record, aptitude examination, and essay—they begin the difficult task of sifting. From the approximately 16,000 entrants, a list of 300 Honorable Mentions is first selected. These are recommended to colleges, universities and technical schools for scholarship consideration.

Then the student's ability to work and think by himself, as evidenced by his essay on his research project, is brought into the picture, and becomes an important factor in the selection of the 40 finalists who win the all-expense five-day trips to Washington.

Arriving there about the end of February, they will participate in a Science Talent Institute, where they will meet leaders in American science and hear from them of newest research advances.

During their five days in Washington, the 40 finalists will be personally interviewed by a judging committee to determine their eligibility for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships which total $11,000. One boy and one girl will each receive $2,400 Westinghouse Grand Science Scholarships ($600 per year for four years). Eight other contestants will receive four-year scholarships of $400 each ($100 per year for four years). Additional scholarships totalling $3,000 may be awarded at the discretion of the judges, who are Dr. Harlow Shapley, Director, Harvard College Observatory; Dr. Harold A. Edgerton and Dr. Steuart Henderson Britt, New York City psychologists, and Dr. Rex E. Buxton, Washington psychiatrist. Drs. Edgerton and Britt are also the designers of the science aptitude examination.

Primary objectives of the Science Talent Search, as stated by Watson Davis, Director of Science Service, which administers the scholarship funds through Science Clubs of America, are:

1. "To discover and foster the education of boys and girls whose scientific skill, talent and ability indicate potential creative originality and warrant scholarships for their development.

2. "To focus the attention of large numbers of scientifically gifted youths on the need for perfecting scientific and research skill and knowledge so that they can increase their capacities for contributing to the rehabilitation of a war-dislocated world and to help the United States, with the aid of science, to lead the world to permanent peace.

3. "To help make the American public aware of the varied and vital role science plays in world affairs and in raising the standard of living."

Since 1942 a total of 240 young scientists have been named as winners of trips to the Science Talent Institute. Among this select group of 61 women and 179 men are 11 who have finished college and are now employed full time as chemists, engineers, psychologists, and research assistants in industrial laboratories and as graduate assistants in colleges and universities.

Paralleling the national science talent search, there will also be a number of state science talent searches. In those states all students entering the national search are automatically entered also in the state search. Last year there were state science talent searches in Georgia, Louisiana, Illinois, Iowa, Tennessee and Virginia; this year there will probably be additions to the list. Winners of the state science talent searches are given recognitions of various kinds, including honorary memberships in State Academies and the American Association for the Advancement of Science, and such substantial awards as full-tuition scholarships in colleges and universities in the respective states.

Complete details of the Seventh Annual Science Talent Search can be obtained from Science Clubs of America, 1719 N St. N.W., Washington 6, D. C.

Science News Letter, October 4, 1947

GENERAL SCIENCE

Random Numbers System Devised for Indexing

➤ A NEW way of indexing scientific knowledge which increases many billion times the ability of a sorting card to carry and produce information was announced to the American Chemical Society meeting in New York by Calvin N. Mooers of the Zator Company, Cambridge, Mass.

Applying the mathematical principles of random numbers to this urgent problem of classifying facts of all sorts, the new Zato carding makes possible a new type of literature organization unhampered by any sort of pre-set classification.

Instead of having to devise a classification in advance that encompasses all future details, the random numbers system devised by Mr. Mooers builds its subject headings as needed and brings as many subjects as desired into mechanical relationship.

An individual scientist can use this method in arranging his research and literature notes, it was explained, or a large chemical concern can apply it to its library and information files.

"All sorts of information can be filed successfully in the same file," Mr. Mooers claimed. "The wife may even file her recipes and future social engagements in the same card file as her scientist-husband's chemical formulae without any conflict or mix-up whatever."

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