

GENERAL SCIENCE

Fair Time for Science

Many thousands of youthful scientists exhibit their experimental projects in science fairs all over the country. Finalists of 65 of the larger fairs will go to the National Science Fair.

By WATSON DAVIS

► IT IS science fair time throughout the land! Many thousands of boys and girls who are members of science clubs in our nation's schools are climaxing a year's study and hobby fun with their exhibits.

"Come to the fair" is the invitation from these science club members when they exhibit their projects to their fellow students, teachers, parents, and the public.

Science fairs are now just as fundamentally a part of American life as are the county fairs that did so much to build our agriculture and industry.

The simplest fair is an exhibition of science projects held in the school itself. There are shown all the experiments, collections, and displays that have been worked out by students either in class or as extra-curricular science club activities. In this form only the pupils and the teacher see the exhibits; but enthusiasm soon spreads to make them a feature of a meeting or a showing to which parents and the public of the community are invited.

The exhibits considered most likely to compete favorably with those from other schools and clubs are sent to city-wide or area science fairs.

Local Cooperation

In holding a science fair in a locality, the schools, colleges, civic, scientific and technical societies, industries and newspapers usually cooperate. A teachers' committee takes the initiative and a newspaper, as part of its educational service to the community, often will sponsor it, assisting on the publicity, promotion, arrangements and financing.

Exhibitors in such fairs are rewarded by the stimulation of having their work shown and by receiving certificates indicating the impression their work made on the judges. Other awards, ranging from emblems to cash prizes and scholarships, are sometimes given.

A typical science fair will have several hundred exhibits, viewed by thousands of people who visit an exhibition hall which may be a school or college gymnasium, an armory, a museum, or other such area. Some science fairs, even in large cities, accept the maximum number of exhibits the hall will allow. In other cases, the city or area fair receives only an allotted number of exhibits from each school which holds its own eliminations first.

The exhibits are judged by committees of

scientists, engineers, and other experts of the community, using rules adapted from judging standards now nationally approved.

From local fairs the best exhibits made by individual students (not groups), attending sophomore, junior or senior classes of any secondary school, are selected for entry into the annual National Science Fair, held in a different city each year, under the auspices of SCIENCE SERVICE and cooperating newspapers. Not more than two finalists, usually one boy and one girl, are selected and are sponsored to the National Science Fair.

This year more than 65 fairs, from Lancaster, N. H., to San Diego, Calif., are sending their finalists to the Sixth National Science Fair at Cleveland, May 12-14. There in a large hall more than 125 boys and girls will set up their exhibits to be judged by leading scientists and engineers. More than 40 awards of scientific apparatus, etc., worth over \$2,000, that are wished for by the young scientists will be distributed.

The exhibits shown at the science fairs cover almost every subject under the sun. One boy built a television camera. Another

combined a telescope and microscope. A lie detector was put to work as a demonstration.

There are always several high-voltage generators. Collections of plants, insects and rocks are made and displayed. The nervous reactions of rats and the migration of the cottontail rabbit were among the studies of animals. Radio control is put to work in several projects. Wind tunnels are built and operated.

Vitamins, drugs, enzymes, yeast and plants rival embryonic chicks and fruit flies as subjects for study. Chemical gardening or hydroponics makes a favorite exhibit.

SCIENCE SERVICE, Washington, D. C., is the national sponsor for Science Clubs of America and a teacher or other adult can affiliate a group without charge. Several publications suggest projects.

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• RADIO

Saturday, May 7, 1955, 5:00-5:15 p.m., EDT
"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over the CBS Radio Network. Check your local CBS station.

Finalists of the Sixth National Science Fair will describe their projects, speaking from Yankton, S. Dak.; Oklahoma City, Okla.; Berkeley, Calif.; Knoxville, Tenn.; Minot, N. Dak.; Charleston, W. Va.; Phoenix, Ariz.



SCIENCE FAIR EXHIBIT — Young scientist shows what she can do in science fair exhibit. Beatrice Wood, 17, of Cleveland has extracted chlorophyll by chromatography, one of the latest chemical methods. Hers was one of the projects exhibited in last year's National Science Fair.