

GENERAL SCIENCE

Science for Everybody

Favorite Hobby Keeps Boys and Girls Willingly After School; Youngsters Up to 85 Grind Telescope Mirrors

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AMERICA is going in for club life in a big way these days.

It is not the kind of high, exclusive living that you read about in the society novels. It has been called "the most hopeful phenomenon in American life today"—the banding together of amateur scientists, young and old, into clubs to make telescopes, collect insects, take photographs, raise animals, breed fishes, make radio sets, and engage in hundreds of other scientific hobbies and activities.

For science clubs are the favorite evening hobby of many neighborhoods. Boys and girls willingly stay after school to work in science laboratories and perform their experiments, aided by teachers who sponsor such extra activities. Youngsters up to 85 may be found grinding telescope mirrors or charting the light of variable stars—or doing dozens of other scientific tasks for the fun of it.

Men who work in shops have their own groups that often pursue science subjects quite remote from their daily work.

Age or youth is no barrier to such useful activities. In fact, fathers and sons and mothers and daughters often become members of the same club on a plane of equality in interest and effort.

In Almost Every High School

In almost every one of America's 20,000 high schools there are one or more science clubs, some tackling science in general and some limiting themselves to some particular subject such as radio, or physics, or chemistry, or biology.

Unheralded in most localities, there are many thousands of informal science clubs organized among adults who often find working in science as an avocation more interesting than their regular work. In the Philadelphia area alone there are some 300 such clubs with about 30,000 members.

The science club movement has become more than merely national, for there are clubs in Central and South America and even across the oceans.

To bring all the many local activities together into an international organization, Science Clubs of America is being sponsored by Science Service from its headquarters in Washington. Various services, such as helpful literature, advice from experts, hints on what to do and how to do it, insignia, and many other things will be provided by the national organization working in cooperation with local newspapers.

The real front-line work of science clubs will be done in their own localities. One of the most promising features of the enlarged movement is that clubs of adults will be able to cooperate with youth clubs, and all the clubs of a region will have the chance to attend meetings, conferences and exhibitions.

About a thousand high school clubs in every part of the nation are already

formally enrolled, with new charters being granted every day. Some of these have been in existence for many years, organized with the cooperation of local scientific bodies, and some were affiliated with the American Institute of the City of New York, which is now devoting its major energies to the New York area, while Science Service handles the national organization.

Academies of Science Joining

National and state science organizations are joining in the movement, particularly the state academies of science.

Museums, schools, libraries, industries, and newspapers are cooperating in various ways in making science clubs effective.

Hints on how to perform experiments and engage in science hobbies are published regularly in local newspapers and the SCIENCE NEWS LETTER. By bringing Science Service dispatches on discoveries and achievements in science to its readers



SKYSCRAPERS

That is the interesting name of the astronomical society in Providence, R. I., that built this Schwarzschild camera used by Prof. Charles H. Smiley, of Brown University (center) on an eclipse expedition. W. Edwin Stevens, left, and J. Frank Morrissey, right, built the instrument.