GENERAL SCIENCE

STS Honorable Mentions

Fifty-five girls and 205 boys will be recommended for scholarships as a result of their selection for honors in the Eighth Annual Science Talent Search.

➤ HONORABLE MENTIONS in the Eighth Annual Science Talent Search were announced by Watson Davis, director of Science Service. Girls number 55 of the 260 outstanding seniors in the list, and 205 are boys; the division was determined by the ratio of girls to boys who participated in the competition.

The 260 young people to whom Honorable Mention listing was given reside in 173 communities, located in 38 states and the District of Columbia. They were chosen from among 16,218 entrants, 2,482 of whom completed the science aptitude examination, submitted recommendations and scholarship records and wrote essays on "My Scientific Project."

Forty highest-ranking boys and girls have already been notified that they are winners of all-expense trips to Washington, where they will spend five days as participants in the Science Talent Institute, to be held here March 3 through March 7. At the closing session of the Institute, $11,000 in Westinghouse Science Scholarships will be distributed. (*See SNL,* Feb. 5).

All 300 (40 winners; 260 honorable mentions) selected for honors will be recommended as candidates for matriculation to scholarship-awarding colleges and universities.

In the seven preceding Science Talent Searches, most of the students named in the Honorable Mentions list have been offered scholarships, and many of those named this year will qualify for valuable scholarships and other financial aid in the colleges, universities and technical schools of their choice. The judges found all 300 winners to be students of outstanding ability.

Students in the Honorable Mentions list invariably rank high in their high school graduating classes: 35% of the boys and 40% of the girls stood first or second among their classmates. All the boys and girls have studied some science and/or mathematics for three years or more in high-school.

The Honorable Mentions did not win their places merely by keeping their noses in books; without exception they show records of participation in extracurricular activities. Science clubs have attracted many: 109 belong to such clubs, most of which are affiliated with the Science Clubs of America.

In Alabama one student received honorable mention; in Arizona, four; Arkansas, one; California, 15; Colorado, three; Connecticut, five; District of Columbia, two; Florida, three; Georgia, five; Illinois, 11; Indiana, eight; Iowa, four; Kansas, three; Maryland, two; Massachusetts, three; Michigan, five; Minnesota, three; Missouri, two; Montana, five; Nebraska, seven; New Hampshire, two; New Jersey, 18; New York, 79; North Carolina, one; North Dakota, one; Ohio, 11; Oklahoma, two; Oregon, one; Pennsylvania, 21; South Dakota, one; Tennessee, one; Texas, five; Utah, three; Vermont, one; Virginia, seven; Washington, five; West Virginia, three; Wisconsin, five; and Wyoming one.

Science News Letter, February 19, 1949

ZOOLOGY

Whales Found Loquacious

➤ WHALES that whistle, squeal, chirp, mew, cluck and even trill were reported by two Harvard scientists.

William E. Schevill and Barbara Lawrence, both of the Harvard College Museum of Comparative Anatomy, explained that they had listened in on some white whales or porpoises in the lower Saguenay River in Quebec, Canada. They got in on the whales' party line by using a hydrophone, or underwater microphone, with an amplifier.

They described some of the whale noises as "ticking and clucking sounds slightly reminiscent of a string orchestra tuning up, as well as mewing and occasional chirps."

Other times, "the calls would suggest a crowd of children shouting in the distance."

On two occasions they heard the trilling of whistles which have been heard above the water. These have given the white whale the nickname, "sea canary."

All this bizarre collection of noises in what we would term quiet waters led the Harvard scientists to point out that these white whales are mammals, even as people. And they may be more like humans than anyone would have guessed.

"This loquaciousness contrasts markedly with most terrestrial (land) herd mammals and compares with such chatterboxes as monkeys and men," the whale listeners commented.

The Harvard zoologists were sure that they were listening to white whales because they could see them in the water through field glasses while as far as two miles away. The noise, from 60 to 90 feet under the surface of the water, would begin as the scientists saw the porpoises approach, grow louder as the noisy animals came near the hydrophone and fade as they passed out of sight.

White whales are porpoises that grow to lengths between 12 and 14 feet, with a limit of about 18 feet. They are also called beluga, a Russian word meaning white whale and, by scientists, *Delphinapterus leucas.*

In addition to their experiments in the Saguenay, the scientists tried listening to white whales in the St. Lawrence River. But strong currents, shoals, tide rips and traffic made listening for porpoises difficult.

The calls of these sea mammals, the zoologists suggested, are sufficiently characteristic that it may be possible to identify them at sea by listening for them. Future listening also may go beyond the range of the unaided human ear in supersonics, it was proposed.

Science News Letter, February 19, 1949

CROSS COUNTRY SPRINT—The power of the six jet engines of the U. S. Air Force Boeing B-47, that recently flew at 607 miles an hour from Washington State to Washington, D. C., is indicated by the "trailer" left behind in the take-off. This plane is about the size of the famous B-29, and can carry a bomb load of 10,000 pounds. A notable feature is its swept-back wings; also two of its engines carried near wing-tips.