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## Society of General Physiologists

*New Affiliate of the American Association for the Advancement of Science*

THE Society of General Physiologists was founded in the summer of 1946 at the Marine Biological Laboratory, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, under the leadership of Robert Chambers, E. N. Harvey, L. V. Heilbrunn, and M. H. Jacobs. For some years there had been a growing need for more communication between biologists interested primarily in fundamental physiological principles rather than in applications, and in phenomena common to all organisms rather than those limited to special groups. The degree to which the proposed society met this need is indicated by the fact that more than half of the hundred charter members attended on short notice the founding meeting and first program of scientific papers in September, 1946.

From the very start the Society has ignored the artificial boundary between plant and animal physiology. From the organizational viewpoint the working of this policy is seen in the mixed membership of botanists and zoologists and in the list of past presidents of the Society: L. V. Heilbrunn, D. R. Goddard, H. F. Blum, K. V. Thimann, J. H. Bodine, L. R. Blinks, and H. B. Steinbach. From the scientific viewpoint the policy has paid off richly in interesting meeting programs, often disclosing unsuspected links between diverse disciplines. Illustrative of such presentations are the one- or two-day symposia sponsored annually, among which (with organizers) have been "Biological Oxidations" (Barron), "Biological Effects of Light" (Wald), "Electrolytes and Tissue Function" (Fenn), "Cell Function in Relation to Cell Structure" (Mazia, reported in *SCIENCE*, 114, 683 [1951]), "Contributions of Comparative Physiology to General Physiology" (Giese), and this year's colloquium on "Photoperiodism" (Hendricks), described in some detail in this issue of *SCIENCE*. A measure of the deliberately informal workings of the Society is the frequent presence of nonmembers on such programs. Besides the symposia, one or more additional

days of the annual meeting are devoted to short contributed papers, abstracts of which have often been published in the *Biological Bulletin*.

The Society has usually met at Woods Hole in June or September, finding the relaxed atmosphere there peculiarly congenial, and the physical arrangements and off-season accommodations both convenient and well suited to its modest financial resources (annual dues are two dollars). However, meetings are held elsewhere whenever feasible (for example, with the A.I.B.S. at Ithaca in 1952), and a real effort is made to stimulate local interchange of physiological ideas by regional meetings, such as those held in Philadelphia, New York, Bethesda, Pacific Grove, and St. Louis.

The management of the Society is vested in a council consisting of the three officers and four additional members, all elected. The 1953-54 incumbents are: president, A. K. Parpart (Princeton); vice-president, F. A. Brown, Jr. (Northwestern); secretary-treasurer, J. B. Buck (National Institutes of Health); council members, D. E. S. Brown (Michigan), L. R. Blinks (Stanford), D. R. Griffin (Harvard), and W. D. McElroy (Johns Hopkins). Our A.I.B.S. representative is W. R. Duryee (National Cancer Institute), and our representatives on the AAAS Council are H. B. Steinbach (Minnesota) and L. R. Blinks.

Membership in the Society is attained by election, after nomination by two members, and approval by the council. Qualifications are broad, aside from the requirement of a substantial record of published basic research in general physiology, and the composition of the present roster of about 250 testifies to the underlying unity of interest among biochemists, cytologists, biophysicists, microbial, cell, and comparative physiologists, and other brands of "General Physiologist."

JOHN BUCK

*Society of General Physiologists*

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