Another New Year has arrived, and for Science, which celebrates the 125th year of its publication, it’s a happy anniversary. Please don’t worry—we don’t plan to salute the occasion with a summary of all the new knowledge that has been introduced in our pages over the past century and a quarter. But we do invite readers to consult the very first issue to get a sense of how much has happened over that time: Volume 1, Number 1, published in July of 1880 (www.sciencemag.org/sciext/firstissue). In fact, every past issue of Science can be found by consulting JSTOR, an archive available to any member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (through the aaasmember.sciencemag.org gateway) or to anyone in a JSTOR-participating institution. The pioneer issues contain some interesting items, including an essay by Thomas Huxley, one of Charles Darwin’s admiring scientific colleagues, in which he argues that Darwin’s theory of evolution is here to stay. Good call.

What shall we do by way of celebration? We may have a party, but we have a more serious purpose in mind. One of the things that has changed most dramatically since Volume 1, Number 1 is the increasingly significant role played by scientists in countries that, when Huxley was writing about Darwin, were not among the nations in which new experimental work was being done. Today, researchers in the developing world are addressing some of the most interesting and daunting scientific challenges of our time, often under limitations that are not shared by their colleagues in wealthier countries.

We have invited a dozen of the best of these to provide an account of their work, and one of these essays will appear in each month of this anniversary year. We asked them to talk about how they practice their own kind of science rather than about the special scientific needs of their own nations or regions. The first of these, by the South African botanist Patricia Berjak, appears on p. 47 of this issue. It demonstrates clearly the connections between basic research (in this case on seed biology and storage regimes) and the needs of regional ecosystems.

Anniversaries are also a time to look for ways to get better. From time to time, we ask readers of Science how they use the journal, what they turn to first, and what difficulties they have with our material. It may not surprise you that if you are typical, you turn first to a Brevia, Report, or Research Article in your own subdiscipline. The next stop is likely to be News, Perspectives, or Policy Forums. After that, perhaps something of interest in Books, or Letters, or even (hopeful thought here) the Editorial page. The discouraging aspect of what we learn is how difficult you find it to access and appreciate original research in areas outside your own. And that’s not your fault. The problem is not unique to Science. It is hard for authors to avoid aiming reports of original research at the cognoscenti, especially in fields where movement at the frontier is active. Because the methodological grain of each discipline has become extremely fine, it requires heavy use of technical language, jargon, and acronyms. That tends to make even the title of the average communication in molecular biology in any top-tier journal impenetrable by an ecologist, let alone a physicist. But it’s not quite fair to lay the entire problem on complexity, which after all is part of the real world and therefore something we have to deal with. So what can be done?

My colleagues and I had an initial experience with this translation challenge when we began, 2 years ago, to write those one-sentence descriptions of the main result of each paper for inclusion in the Table of Contents. We are still surprised from time to time at how hard it is to communicate the essence of a finding in nontechnical language that can be understood by the nonspecialist. This Week in Science, News, Perspectives, and Editors’ Choice are all helpful for providing context and making new research more accessible. We’d like to do more, and Berjak’s article in this issue supplies a useful model of how to make a scientific story readable for those outside the specialty.

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A New Year and Anniversary

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