

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

January 5, 1970

I have been following with much interest the development of your new publication, until I can no longer remain a member of the silent majority.

I submit that the appearance of the term "Newsletter" in the title was an important factor responsible for the generation of comments on various points by your readers. Particularly interesting are the views of Drs. Sabrosky and Mattingly as set forth on pp. 90-92, Vol. 1, No. 4. In the strictest sense, the news portions of Volume 1 of the Newsletter are relegated to that information you cite under "Miscellaneous" in your Contents, Vol. 1 (November 1969). On the surface this appears to contradict the objectives of your publication. At the same time, items appear in No. 4 under the heading "Activities", which appeals to me as a much more appropriate title in view of the importance of the word "Letter" in the overall name. That the name Culex (Melanoconion) annulipes is found to be invalid is also "news" to me, but for a rather different reason, I'm afraid!

As you are aware, information storage and retrieval in biology is one of my current interests. The Entomological Society of America's Special Committee on Information Retrieval is well into its second year of study on the feasibility of establishing some kind of information "system" for entomology. Those of us connected with this investigation have become particularly concerned with current and future publication practices in entomology, particularly with how they can be related to a system which stores information being generated in ever increasing amounts. The appearance of any new publication outlet, although understandable in view of the pressures which it is designed to relieve, causes us an involuntary shudder despite any plausible justifications that can be made for it, simply because it is one more source that must be coped with.

We are still considering means by which all pertinent information in entomology may be included in the system, but at the moment one thing seems obvious - the articles appearing on pp. 74-89 of Vol. 1, No. 4, most certainly should be made available to the current abstracting and indexing services in biology. The problem here is that such services - specifically the publications of BIOSIS (and perhaps others) - do not routinely include publications containing the words "Newsletter" in their titles. We consider this a critical gap in information transfer that may continue to gain in importance, as it appears that any information storage and retrieval system to come will rely heavily on extant abstracting and indexing services.

Without any doubt your journal (note choice of word!) serves a very useful purpose at the moment - that of rapid publication. If only there were a way to keep it so without the cost (hence price) rising out of sight. I will watch the product of your efforts with a great deal of interest as an excellent barometer of the pressures of our times!

Sincerely,

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