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THE American Physical Society was founded on May 20, 1899 by a group of about forty physicists who met in a small lecture room in Columbia University's Fayerweather Hall in New York City. The first regular meeting of the Society was held five months later. Before that time, physicists had customarily joined in the annual meetings of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, its Section B being concerned primarily with physics. The formation of an independent Society for the "advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of physics" was only one of a series of events marking the swift development of physics in the history of American science.

When the newly formed American Physical Society joined in the 49th meeting of the AAAS in New York in June, 1900, the Society and the Association's Section B met on alternate days. It was remarked in a contemporary report of the event that although the two programs were kept separate, there was little else to distinguish the groups. The difference, eloquently enough stated by the action of the charter members in forming the new Society, was their conviction that the time had come for a separate professional scientific organization devoted to the advancement of physics. A cooperative and close relationship has nevertheless been maintained between the two organizations, and the Physical Society for many years met frequently in joint session with Section B of the AAAS. At the end of its first year, the Physical Society had a total membership of only fifty-nine; the present membership is nearly ten thousand.

A Council composed of the officers of the Society, eight elected members, and certain past presidents is charged with all the affairs of the Society. Technical meetings and publications constitute the Society's main services to its members. The by-laws provide that at least four regular meetings be held annually, but in practice there are usually seven. Of these, one (the Annual Meeting, held most often in New York City) takes place between the 15th of December and the following March 1st, and its program includes an annual business meeting. The Spring Meeting is ordinarily held in Washington, the Fall Meeting in Chicago, and two meetings are held annually on the Pacific Coast. Other meetings occur at such times and in such localities as are determined by action of the Society's Council.

With the growth of the Society, provision was made in 1931 for Regional Sections. There are at present the

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Metropolitan Section, the New England Section, the New York State Section, the Ohio Section, and the Southeastern Section. Provision is also made for "Divisions", each of which has as its purpose "the advancement and diffusion of the knowledge of a specified subject or subjects in physics". The present five Divisions are those of Electron Physics, High-Polymer Physics, Solid State Physics, Fluid Dynamics, and Chemical Physics.

The Physical Review, a journal of experimental and theoretical physics established in the summer of 1893 by Edward L. Nichols at Cornell University, has been the official publication of the Physical Society since 1913. At that time, the Society took over the control of the *Review* and assumed full financial responsibility for its maintenance as had been proposed by the journal's editors, Professor Nichols, Ernest Merritt, and Frederick Bedell. The latter was elected as the Society's first managing editor, a post which he held until 1922. His successor was G. S. Fulcher, who was followed in 1925 by John T. Tate. Professor Tate continued as managing editor until his death in 1950. The present incumbent is S. A. Goudsmit of the Brookhaven National Laboratory.

By 1931, the quantity of material submitted for publication in *The Physical Review* had increased to such an extent that a second journal was established by the Physical Society. This new publication, the monthly journal, *Physics*, was intended to contain articles in applied physics of the type formerly included in *The Physical Review*. Two years later, an arrangement was made with the Society of Rheology whereby rheological articles were carried in *Physics* and the journal was published jointly by both Societies. In 1937, responsibility for the management and publication of *Physics* was transferred from the Physical Society to the American Institute of Physics, and at that time the name of the publication was changed to the *Journal of Applied Physics*. Elmer Hutchisson, dean of the faculty at the Case Institute of Technology, has edited the journal since its inception.

At present, the AIP also publishes the *Physical Review* for the Society, as it does the *Reviews of Modern Physics*, a quarterly journal designed to provide survey descriptions of specialized topics in physics written by experts in the various fields. Its editor is J. W. Buchta, professor of physics at the University of Minnesota.

The *Bulletin* of the American Physical Society, which gives a complete program of each meeting of the So-

ciety, with abstracts of papers to be presented, is distributed to all members. *Physics Abstracts* (Section A of *Science Abstracts*), which is edited and issued monthly by the British Institute of Electrical Engineers, has for many years been circulated to all members of the Society. In the future this circulation will be only to members who indicate their desire to receive *Physics Abstracts* by paying an amount in addition to normal dues. The American Physical Society is a chief contributor to the support of *Physics Abstracts*.

Three categories of membership (Fellows, Members, and Honorary Members) are established by the constitution of the American Physical Society. The main condition for Fellowship is that the candidate must have contributed to the advancement of physics by independent, original research, or have rendered some other service which is considered equivalent, toward the advancement of physics, to such investigations. Only Fellows may be elected to office in the Society.

Requirements for membership are somewhat more general and easier to fulfill. Candidates may be graduate students in physics, teachers of physics in colleges or secondary schools or other physicists who have not yet completed investigations which warrant election to Fellowship, persons working in related fields, or non-physicists whose interest and activity in physics nevertheless make them desirable as members.

The category of Honorary Membership is reserved for pre-eminent physicists from other countries than the United States. The Society's roster of Honorary Members is a notable one and has included S. A. Arrhenius, Sir William Bragg, Lord Kelvin, H. A. Lorentz, Max Planck, Lord Rutherford, E. Wiechert, W. F. K. Bjerknes, Niels Bohr, Sir James Chadwick, Louis de Broglie, P. A. M. Dirac, Albert Einstein, H. A. Kramers, Max von Laue, and Arnold Sommerfeld.

During the last five decades the American Physical Society has played an important role in the evolution of modern physics. In this period also it has risen to take a leading position in the international scientific scene, and although most of its attention has been given to fundamental research rather than to the applications of physics, its members have nevertheless through their research contributed heavily to the advance of modern technology.

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