

## How to Win Friends and Influence

Author: Beardsley, Timothy M.

Source: BioScience, 63(8) : 607

Published By: American Institute of Biological Sciences

URL: <https://doi.org/10.1525/bio.2013.63.8.1>

---

BioOne Complete ([complete.BioOne.org](https://complete.BioOne.org)) is a full-text database of 200 subscribed and open-access titles in the biological, ecological, and environmental sciences published by nonprofit societies, associations, museums, institutions, and presses.

Your use of this PDF, the BioOne Complete website, and all posted and associated content indicates your acceptance of BioOne's Terms of Use, available at [www.bioone.org/terms-of-use](https://www.bioone.org/terms-of-use).

Usage of BioOne Complete content is strictly limited to personal, educational, and non - commercial use. Commercial inquiries or rights and permissions requests should be directed to the individual publisher as copyright holder.

---

BioOne sees sustainable scholarly publishing as an inherently collaborative enterprise connecting authors, nonprofit publishers, academic institutions, research libraries, and research funders in the common goal of maximizing access to critical research.

**PUBLISHER**  
Richard T. O'Grady

**EDITOR IN CHIEF**  
Timothy M. Beardsley

**MANAGING EDITOR**  
James M. Verdier

**BOOK REVIEW EDITOR**  
**PEER REVIEW / PRODUCTION COORDINATION**  
Jennifer A. Williams

**MANUSCRIPT EDITOR**  
Nathan N. True

**Editors:** Eye on Education: Beth Baker (educationoffice@aibs.org); Feature articles: Beth Baker (features@aibs.org); Washington Watch: Robert E. Gropp (publicpolicy@aibs.org).

**Editorial Board:** Rick Bonney, Gordon Brown, Richard M. Burian, Catherine E. Carr, Joseph Cloud, Scott Collins, Rita R. Colwell, Charlene D'Avanzo, Kathleen Donohue, David L. Evans, Cassandra G. Extavour, Eric A. Fischer, Kirk Fitzhugh, Nick Haddad, Geoffrey M. Henebry, Cynthia S. Jones, Linda A. Joyce, Edna S. Kaneshiro, David M. Leslie Jr., Harvey B. Lillywhite, Alan C. Love, Paula Mabree, Marshall A. Martin, Janice Moore, Peter B. Moyle, Ben Pierce, Jason Podrabsky, J. Michael Scott, Daniel Simberloff, Martin Tracey, Monica Turner, Randy Wayne, Judith S. Weis, David S. Wilcove, Jean A. Wyld.

**BioScience** (ISSN 0006-3568; e-ISSN 1525-3244) is published 12 times a year by the American Institute of Biological Sciences, 1900 Campus Commons Dr., Suite 200, Reston, VA 20191, in collaboration with the University of California Press. Periodicals postage paid at Berkeley, CA, and additional mailing offices. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to *BioScience*, University of California Press, Journals and Digital Publishing, 2000 Center Street, Suite 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223, or e-mail customerservice@ucpressjournals.com.

**Membership and subscription:** Individual members, go to <https://aibs.site-ym.com/?page=IndMem> for benefits, services, and additional information. Subscription renewal month is shown in the four-digit year-month code in the upper right corner of the mailing label. Institutional subscribers, go to [www.ucpressjournals.com](http://www.ucpressjournals.com) or e-mail customer service@ucpressjournals.com. Out-of-print issues and volumes are available from Periodicals Service Company, 11 Main Street, Germantown, NY 12526-5635; telephone: 518-537-4700; fax: 518-537-5899; Web site: [www.periodicals.com](http://www.periodicals.com).

**Advertising:** For information about display and online advertisements and deadlines, e-mail adsales@ucpressjournals.com. For information about classified placements and deadlines, contact Jennifer A. Williams, AIBS (jwilliams@aibs.org).

**Copying and permissions notice:** Authorization to copy article content beyond fair use (as specified in sections 107 and 108 of the US Copyright Law) for internal or personal use, or the internal or personal use of specific clients, is granted by the Regents of the University of California on behalf of AIBS for libraries and other users, provided that they are registered with and pay the specified fee through the Copyright Clearance Center (CCC), [www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com). To reach the CCC's Customer Service Department, call 978-750-8400 or e-mail [info@copyright.com](mailto:info@copyright.com). For permission to distribute electronically, republish, resell, or repurpose material, use the CCC's Rightslink service on JSTOR at <http://www.jstor.org/r/ucal/bio>. Submit all other permissions and licensing inquiries through the University of California Press's Rights and Permissions Web site, [www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp](http://www.ucpressjournals.com/reprintInfo.asp), or e-mail [journalspermissions@ucpress.edu](mailto:journalspermissions@ucpress.edu).

**Abstracting and indexing:** For complete abstracting and indexing information, please visit [www.ucpressjournals.com](http://www.ucpressjournals.com).

© 2013 American Institute of Biological Sciences. All rights reserved. Printed by The Sheridan Press.

# BioScience®

**A Forum for Integrating the Life Sciences**  
American Institute of Biological Sciences

## How to Win Friends and Influence

**B**iologists who wish that the public better understood and appreciated their work have a valuable chance to learn why general comprehension of their science is fragmented and, most would say, poor. The *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS; [www.pnas.org](http://www.pnas.org)) this month publishes highly relevant articles on the science of science communication, based on the Arthur M. Sackler Colloquium of that name that took place in Washington, DC, in May 2012 ([www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/completed\\_colloquia/science-communication.html](http://www.nasonline.org/programs/sackler-colloquia/completed_colloquia/science-communication.html)). As scientists, biologists ought to take scientific findings seriously, and many of the social science findings reported are counterintuitive and important.

A draft overview article by Dietram A. Scheufele of the University of Wisconsin–Madison hits some of the key points. Opportunities for the public to learn about science are changing rapidly (think about the decline of science coverage in newspapers and of traditional media in general). Social science shows that attitudes toward science correlate poorly or not at all with scientific literacy. Rather, trust is the key to receptivity: Individuals' attitudes are much more strongly influenced by their ideology and religiosity than by their level of knowledge.

All the more worrying, then, that news outlets are becoming more partisan and increasingly tend to polarize attitudes toward institutions. Yet, simply providing more information about science in public settings, in an attempt to “sell” it, is unlikely to increase buy in—a fact that social scientists have long known but that many others have been reluctant to accept. Such naive efforts risk exacerbating the gaps in understanding between those already well disposed to science and those less so.

Scientists who want to broaden public esteem for their subject must also engage the populace in debates about long-term attitudes and values, while recognizing the crucial importance of cultivating good impressions and of good framing. Researchers serve their profession well when they present information in ways that are accessible to nonexpert viewers, listeners, or readers. Although some scientists are inclined to avoid debates about values, these are unavoidably present at the cutting edge, perhaps especially at the cutting edges of biology and nanotechnology.

The PNAS symposium issue serves as a backdrop to the Roundtable on Public Interfaces of the Life Sciences taking place under the auspices of the National Academy of Sciences. Participants in the roundtable, chaired by May R. Berenbaum (a former president of AIBS), of the University of Illinois at Champaign–Urbana, and by Scheufele, spent several hours in June hearing research updates and learning how scientific organizations are endeavoring to establish better interfaces. Studies and workshops may follow. Many organizations, not least AIBS, are putting effort into improving the interfaces between their science and the wider world (see, for example, [www.aibs.org/public-programs](http://www.aibs.org/public-programs)). We encourage scientists to take advantage of these and other opportunities. Funding for all such efforts is tight, however, and seems likely to get worse before it gets better. Extending the influence of science will, for the foreseeable future, rely heavily on the willingness of individual researchers to improve how they communicate their work's value.

TIMOTHY M. BEARDSLEY  
Editor in Chief

doi:10.1525/bio.2013.63.8.1