

CORRESPONDENCE

The March "First Word" calling for an American Society for Biotechnology prompted our biggest reader response ever—all of it favorable. A sampling follows:

AN AMERICAN SOCIETY FOR BIOTECHNOLOGY (ASB) JUST MIGHT WORK

To the editor:

I like the idea of the formation of a new biotechnology society.

I am not suggesting that people abandon their present scientific associations—far from it. But even though the remarkable developments in biotechnology have been accomplished by scientists of all sorts, the fact remains that these researchers still tend to go to the meetings and read the journals to which they became accustomed as graduate students and post-docs. Sure, some meetings focus strictly on biotech, but the ones I have attended are hardly the forum an investigator at the fron-

tier would choose for the first presentation of important results—yet many researchers in other disciplines would be keenly interested and stimulated by exposure to these results.

A new society just might accomplish this.

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ASB: HOME FOR STRANGERS

To the editor:

I not only approve of the suggestion to create an American Society for Biotechnology, I am very optimistic about the outcome.

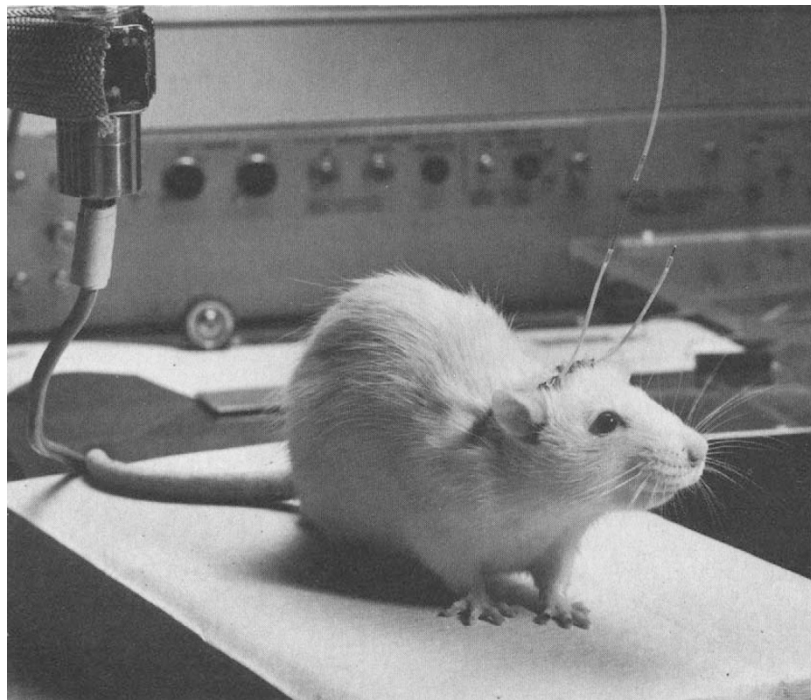
There are, of course, other scientific societies with biotechnology divisions. Although these serve a purpose in bringing together those researchers involved in the field of biotechnology, they are designed and operated solely for that one area of scientific

research. The American Society for Microbiology (ASM), for example, has a number of purposes for its existence, and one of these is to serve the community engaged in biotechnology research. Nevertheless, the organic chemists and biochemists with whom I work, also doing biotech research, express the feeling of being "strangers in a strange land" at ASM meetings. While this may be unfortunate, and certainly not the wish of those involved with the structure and membership of ASM, it is still a very real problem. I would, therefore, strongly urge the creation of a scientific society that would allow the interaction of representatives of the myriad fields of research that make up what we refer to as "biotechnology."

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