

TO: The Executive Board
Arkansas Political Science Association

FROM: Joel Anderson, Editor
Arkansas Political Science Journal

DATE: February 29, 1980

Today you will receive copies of the first issue of the Arkansas Political Science Journal. If publication of the Journal can be continued on a regular basis, it can become, I believe, a bond of community and source of pride—as well as a new medium of communication and stimulus to research.

At the outset I must acknowledge a great debt of gratitude to Walter Nunn, secretary-treasurer of the Association and business manager of the Journal. He contributed selflessly of his time and of his expertise as a publisher. Without his diligence and determination, the Journal would not be available for distribution today.

Also, I must thank the authors who submitted manuscripts and the referees who offered anonymous evaluations. In some instances the critiques of the manuscripts were almost as deserving of publication as the manuscripts themselves.

When the Editorial Board met in Conway last year, two general guidelines were accepted and then reported at the concluding business meeting. The first was to conduct paper evaluations according to forms and procedures modeled after those used by the American Political Science Review—samples of which I had secured. The second was to give preference to papers on Arkansas topics or papers utilizing Arkansas data.

The first was carried out and worked very well. The second, which I pondered from time to time during the year, was also carried out. I believe it is, on balance, an appropriate guideline. But I do feel it is debatable.

Political phenomena in Arkansas have been subjected to very little systematic investigation, though such research could be of value not only to political scientists but also the people of Arkansas. There are few places to report such research. There is a case, therefore, for a journal committed to stimulating and reporting Arkansas-oriented research. On the other hand, Association members in other areas of the discipline may feel excluded.

The foremost problem is cost. The business manager will provide a precise report on the costs of publishing the first number of the Journal. His figures will not reflect in-kind contributions of the business manager and editor.

Our circumstance contrasts with that of the Arkansas Historical Quarterly, which, according to an historian friend of mine, receives a subsidy of \$2,000 from the State and a donated full-time secretary and half-time professor.

The prospects are good that each college and school library in the state will subscribe to the Journal. Further, a publisher or two might purchase a page for advertising. These purchases would reduce but not solve the financial problem. Moreover, someone will have to invest time and effort on behalf of the Association to realize dollars from these sources. If the Journal is to continue, I suspect the members of the Association will have to pay higher dues or registration costs in order to fund more of the total expense of publication. Given our limited number of members, permanent external support may be essential, too.

Having done one issue, we could rather accurately calculate and control the cost of additional issues. For example, we underestimated the total number of pages because we miscalculated the number of pages the numerous tables would absorb when set in type--a mistake we would not repeat. Further, we could develop a realistic A to Z schedule for each issue.

My assumption is that a four-times-a-year journal is out of the question. (Related to an earlier issue, a quarterly would probably permit, maybe necessitate, opening the publication to non-Arkansas topics.) Yet I do recommend that serious thought be given to a two-times-a-year publication.

Two issues a year would serve as a much stronger stimulus to research than an annual publication. They would also serve as vehicles for news, replacing the newsletter. In this plan there would be one issue in early summer with (1) 4 articles, with limitations on their length, (2) a book review section (with its own editor), (3) a news section (with its own editor), (4) a dialogue (letters) section (with its own editor). Then there would be a similar issue in December, except that there would be one less article so that the news section could be expanded to carry the program of the upcoming annual meeting.

The health of the Journal requires a stable financial base that looks beyond a single year. The Journal will have the benefit of a steady flow of quality manuscripts when prospective contributors are confident that the Journal will be appearing on a regular basis and that it will come to be regarded as a respectable professional journal.