

growth in tadpoles, and inhibiting RNA synthesis in planaria, to name a few. At the end of the semester formally written research papers were presented to the class. The processes of formulating, planning, carrying out, and reporting on an original experiment were exciting experiences for everyone, regardless of the outcome of any of the experiments. Some of the students even made recommendations for future research. This is what I had hoped my course would produce: independent, productive thinkers, not founts of biologic knowledge.

These students are in college now. They have all continued to study biology, although many of them will major in psychology or art or English. None of them took the AP exam; nevertheless, a description of the content and format of this course was sufficient for most of them to be placed in advanced courses.

This is the "better way" that I have found. The enthusiasm and learning generated by such a course more than repay the efforts of the teacher who develops and teaches it.

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WHY HE LEFT BIOLOGY-TEACHING

I enjoyed reading your editorial, "Bridging the Gap" (*ABT* 34 [3]: 114). I would like to point out that not only are our nation's secondary and undergraduate students leaving the sciences for the humanities and social sciences, but so are their teachers.

It was because of many of the reasons stated in your editorial that, after five years of teaching high school biology and general science, I decided to leave the profession. How could I teach DNA replication or the anatomy of the earthworm when all around me I saw my students being killed by drugs and poverty? Teaching in New York City demonstrated to me that all the money spent by the federal government to develop BSCS biology and all the other alphabet curricula and the money spent on equipment necessary to implement these curricula could have been better used in the war on poverty.

After leaving the biology-teaching profession I pursued a doctorate in early-childhood education. My feeling was, and still is, that by the end of the third grade the schools have failed to provide an environment that will support the needs of the children in a rapidly changing society. Working with the preschool child and training Head Start teachers has provided for me a means of beginning to "bridge the gap" between school and society.

At the University of Massachusetts School of Education many former secondary-science teachers have few positive statements to offer regarding the

way science is taught within the changing social scene. These "school drop-outs" represent some of the most innovative and talented teachers in the field of education. So many tried to bring about changes, only to be frustrated at every turn. Education is a big business, and science is a big money-spender. Just take a look around at NSTA or NABT conventions. Whose needs are we as science educators serving: the children or the textbook and equipment houses?

I hate to be sarcastic, but your editorials, when considered along with the advertisements and some of the articles, really strike a funny note in me. In the same issue we find articles concerned with how to make a machine-scored test and how to analyse the chromosomes of a frog. I would not even want to cite an example of the advertisements.

I think I have made my point clear. All I can say is "right on!" Keep up the good work—but don't feel bad about leaving the ship sometime: it may be sinking. Anyway, join some good people in the water. We can change science through the back door.

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Who Needs Alaskan Oil?

Development of Alaska's North Slope oil resources has been labeled crucial to America's energy needs, by both the U.S. government and the seven oil companies concerned. If so, how could any of it be exported? But Japan expects to buy Alaskan oil. In a recent, little-noticed remark Japanese prime minister Eisaku Sato said: "We will, of course be purchasing [North Slope] oil in the event that the pipelines are completely laid."

Conservation News

Getting the Phosphate Out

New York state is cracking down on stores that have not taken high-phosphate detergents off their shelves. The state law, aimed at reducing the phosphates in detergents in steps, allows no more than 8.7% by weight of phosphates expressed as phosphorus. Some stores already have been issued summonses and are liable to fines up to \$2,500 for each violation and an additional \$500 for each day. The illegal detergents found on the shelves included Spotless, 18.0% phosphorus; All, 12.9%; Dash, 14.0%; Tide, 12.3%; and Oxydol, 11.7%.

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