

Reports—Current Topics—Queries

FORMER ASSISTANT EDITOR SAM GADD DIES

Sam Gadd, who served as assistant editor of *American Biology Teacher* under former editor Jack Carter, died July 27, 1974, following a heart attack. The survivors of his immediate family include his wife, Mary B., a daughter, and two married sons.

Born Dec. 10, 1922, Sam was a newspaperman for 15 years, from reporter to city editor and publisher of his own weekly. He was a science writer and editor for *New Standard Encyclopedia*, and he later became a member of the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* staff, editing articles on medicine, chemistry, biochemistry, American literature, theater, and dance. From 1968 to 1972, he was consultant in biology for *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, during which time he wrote hundreds of articles on the birds of the world and on other animals, including invertebrates. Sam taught literature and journalism at Columbia College, Chicago, from 1962 to 1968, and he served as poet-in-residence in Colorado schools, under a federal-state program, in 1971 and 1972. Since 1971, Sam had been a free-lance editor of approximately 20 books on biology and medicine.

Richard P. Aulie, of Loyola University of Chicago, who is a regular contributor to *American Biology Teacher*, has written as follows of Sam Gadd:

The untimely death of Sam Gadd saddens all of us who knew him. Although I never met Sam, we corresponded during the last several years. Tinged with humanity and a love of life, his letters and notes go quite beyond the ordinary requirement of duty. They reveal him as a perceptive man, and free of pretension. I am especially obligated to Sam, because he edited my recent articles in *ABT* and on more than one occasion urged me to continue writing. Sam's death reminds us that as we grow older, we accumulate debts that we cannot hope to repay. Anything that we accomplish in this world we cannot do alone, for we must depend on the help of others who, like Sam, are generous with their skill, courtesy, and time.

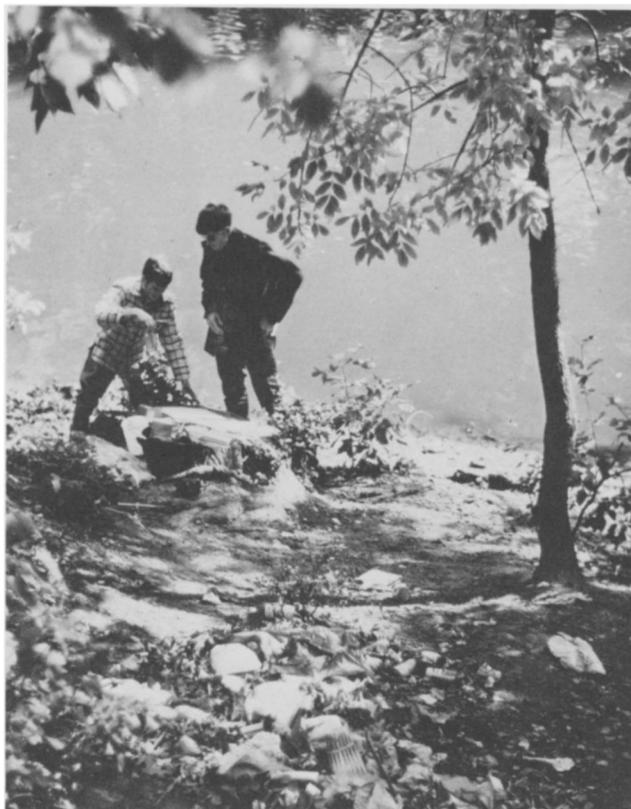
We glide along the tide of life as swiftly as a river, and vanish as quickly as a dream. We are like grass that is green in the morning but mowed down and withered before the evening shadows fall.—Psalm 90.

Sam contributed significantly to the quality of *American Biology Teacher*. As we attempt to maintain the high standards he set, we shall continue to be aware of his influence on the journal for many years to come.

The editorial staff

RIVER STUDY LEADS TO COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

At Wilbur Wright College, in Chicago's Northwest Side, a different kind of environmental course is linking two-year college students with the experiential world in which they live. The word environment, for a sizable number of college students like those at Wright College, has usually meant only urban environment. A different teaching strategy seemed necessary if these students were to perceive the scale and scope of Chicago and its regional ecologic effects. We hoped our students could develop a less parochial view of modern man and urban ecology. Part of the answer has been found in a new course, *Biology 201: The River*.



Impact of urban man on the Des Plaines River near Chicago is studied by Wright College students. Note trash heap in foreground. By collecting indicator organisms and water samples for chemical analysis, students found the quality of the water at this site was low. (Duane Higley photo.)

In 1969 Helen Conlon and I, who are faculty members of the biology department at Wright College, began helping students investigate the Des Plaines River and its drainage system (Chicago and north-eastern Illinois). As ecologic theory says, a river is a natural ecologic unit. It is also a natural laboratory. Rivers and drainage systems are excellent units for studying the impact of man and urbanization. The Des Plaines River "laboratory" is especially significant, because it flows through the densely populated environs of Chicago. By moving our students out of the classrooms and shifting their studies north and south along the river, we had a natural, and almost priceless, investigative opportunity.

Initially, Biology 201 students and Conlon's bacteriology students did individual investigations that included surveys of coliform bacteria, sludge worms, and other indicator organisms (those revealing the degree of water pollution). Chemistry students have since developed information as to where specific chemical pollutants enter and upset the natural balance of the Des Plaines River. Mathematics students have set up statistical models and worked in Wright's computer laboratory. Perhaps of even greater significance: students of music, art, anthropology, and the social sciences at Wright College have begun doing investigative studies of other parameters of man and his environment. Papers prepared by the nonbiology majors add a cross-disciplinary component to our course.

In retrospect, we feel The River is a unique educational experience, because in this course both traditional classroom walls and the rigidity of narrow and arbitrary curricular boundaries are disappearing. In Biology 201 each student investigator selects his own study project. In a "contract agreement" with the supporting faculty member, students first design a data-generating experiment. The students then survey pertinent textbooks and research journals and analyze their sampling data in light of current research. There are no traditional "tests" or "curves." Students prepare seminar talks, and each student writes a final report. Help from the faculty adviser centers on assistance in sampling techniques, statistical models, scientific writing style, editing, and presenting an oral report.

To date, 14 students associated with the course have presented papers at national scientific conventions or other meetings; these have included the Chicago convention of the National Association of Biology Teachers and the National Earth Science Convention, also held in Chicago. Helping to assess the Broadview, Ill., police department's community-relations program became part of a project of one of our students. Other students have appeared on educational television (WTTW, Chicago) or have presented programs at churches and at ecology meetings, including those of the Prairie Club and the University of Illinois Graduate Institute in Urban Ecology. Altogether, 60 students have participated

directly in such studies. One group of honors students in Wright's River course received the first-place award from Phi Theta Kappa for community involvement and environmental concern, as part of that fraternity's national convention (Denver, 1970).

Other Biology 201 students have studied environment and social science in an investigative "laboratory" setting. One such student project surveyed residents' attitudes, community involvement, and environmental awareness in different places, including the town of Riverside, Ill., and Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood.

Some of our students are currently part of a conservation-action group called Save the Valley. We feel that community commitments—in this case, to help guard a state park against commercial pollution—are one measure of the course's success.

What does all this mean academically? Primarily, we feel our students can best learn about Chicago through participation. One afternoon our class was observing how the highly polluted Silver Creek flows into and fouls the Des Plaines River near Melrose Park, Ill. A student asked, "Are you trying to tell us there is some connection between the quality of our rivers and the quality of our living?"

Actually we *do not* attempt to "tell" the Biology 201 students what or how to think. Learning while standing on the bank of a polluted stream, however, is a kind of learning that surpasses listening to a teacher's lecture. We feel that experiential learning, in combination with quantitative and qualitative thinking (for example, thinking about the degree of pollution and the quality of life), has a valid role in education. At Wright College it is obvious that we are not teaching students who will all seek doctorates in ecology; but educated non-Ph.D.s are important too. We do think, though, that personal involvement and individual participation are the key factors and are important in getting our Biology 201 students to accomplish what they have done.

Other colleges, too, could study river pollution and urban sprawl. These could become central matters for the attention of their students. We advocate investigative courses like The River and feel such courses help make "community" an increasingly important part of the community-college concept.

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TEMPERATURE STUDIES IN MAN

Many courses in the life sciences consider briefly the difference between homiothermic (warm-blooded) and poikilothermic (cold-blooded) animals. Unfortunately, the consideration often is restricted to the assertion that (i) poikilotherms do not regulate their temperatures but, within limits, adapt to the temperature of the environment and (ii) homio-