

Letters

N.A.B.T: FOR PRIDE IN PROFESSION

Members of NABT should take substantial pride in the action of the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declaring the Tennessee "Genesis Law" unconstitutional. The competence of our counsel Frederic S. LeClercq in pursuing a federal ruling in this case is obvious, in that the court's opinion, in his words, "was a complete vindication of our seeking redress initially in the federal rather than the state courts . . . our victory in the Court of Appeals was substantial and decisive."

The court's ruling also constituted vindication of NABT's decision to pursue this action through legal channels and to establish the "Fund For Freedom in Science Teaching" in support of the effort. Whatever our personal feelings regarding the continuing and often irrational evolution-creation debate, we owe it to ourselves to stand and be counted in support of constitutional guarantees of freedom to pursue a professional calling with integrity and with impunity from unjust and unwarranted interference.

At this writing, it remains to be seen what long-term effects this ruling may have in deterring similar actions by other states. Even now, it appears that the state of Tennessee will pursue the question through appeal. What matters most is that the question has been elevated to the level of relevant action affecting all states; and that NABT continue to have the support of its members and others in response to appeals for funds. This is certainly not the last time that we shall be faced with problems of this sort. Efforts to limit use of living materials in classrooms are becoming a threat to effective biology teaching in some states, notably California. Nor have we sufficient funds on hand to complete our obligations in the present case.

This is one of the few occasions when NABT has risen to a major challenge and has won. Don't let it be our last. Continue your contributions to the Fund for Freedom in Science Teaching and continue to stand tall for your profession.

Thomas J. Cleaver
President, NABT

FILM DISTRIBUTOR ADDRESS

I am pleased that you listed my film *Cry of the Marsh* in the "Letters" section of the January issue (*ABT* 37[1]:52) even though the distributor's address was unavailable. The film can be ordered for preview from ACI Films, 35 W. 45th St., New York 10036.

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COLLECTING PLANKTON: A USEFUL VARIATION

In the May 1975 issue (*ABT* 37[5]:302), Helen Davis Brown discusses a method of collecting plankton on submerged microscope slides ("Collecting Aquatic Microorganisms: the Glass Slide Method"). Upon removing the slides from the water for microscopic examination, students are directed to clean off the bottom of each slide.

An old and useful variation of this method is to place the slides in pairs, tightly fitted into the slots of the slide box. When the slides are removed and separated, one side of each slide will be clean and free of organisms.

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Helen Davis Brown comments:

This is a satisfactory and convenient variation of the method I described. In order to obtain a variety of organisms, including algae, care should be taken to position slides vertically in the water, however, as indicated in my article.

SUPPORT YOUR NATIONAL CONSERVATION GROUP

Environmental awareness and concern is shaping the outlook and content of junior high, high school, and college biology courses. Teachers and students alike are vitally concerned. This concern has led to the development of many new and innovative programs in environmental education at all levels, ranging from the study of ecology of an entire river to the organization of an ecology club. Such programs are excellent in that they give teachers and students "hands on" experience in the satisfaction and frustration of local environmental stewardship. However, what about national and international environmental concerns? Yes, you can write letters to your congressman but there is also something else that both teachers and students can do at this level—join a national conservation group.

In our school the 7th grade life science classes and the 10th grade biology classes and their teacher belong to both the National Audubon Society and the National Wildlife Federation. After hearing an explanation of the objectives and programs of both these groups, students were eager to contribute to group