

memberships in both organizations. All contributions were voluntary and only enough money was collected for group membership. Almost daily students bring in newspaper clippings or magazine articles to show how, through these organizations, their small but important contribution is improving the quality of their environment.

I would urge every teacher to pick a conservation group that supports his views and then support this group. It is something that teachers and students can do for pennies, yet it can bring personal satisfaction and help worthwhile organizations safeguard our environment.

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THE NON-SCHOOL DICTIONARY OF 1984

Your "Letter from the Future" in a recent issue (*ABT* 37[4]:239) was most enlightening. I had always thought I was unique, sitting up here in the future, looking back at the past. But it is most gratifying to discover that I am not alone.

Anyway, you ask us to let you know if we hear anything from the future, so I am taking the liberty of adding one more observation to your very comprehensive survey. You made no mention of the radical change that took place in the English language during the 1970s and '80s, and I want to address myself to this phase.

One need only compare the *Non-School Dictionary* of 1984 with the outmoded *College Dictionary* of 1975 to realize what has happened. Evidently the concept of MAN has been obliterated completely. It all started when some ardent "equal righters" of the '70s raised objection to the word *chairman* because it ended in MAN. They proclaimed correctly that a member of either sex can run a meeting or chair a committee. Therefore, they argued, the term should be changed to *chairPERSON*. Before long, other words underwent the same evolution, and it became customary to speak of a policePERSON, a mailPERSON, a salesPERSON, a doorPERSON, and such like.

It wasn't until 1980 that we realized how little this change had really accomplished towards the elimination of sex bias. Alas! *person* ends in SON which is just about as male as anything can be. So the word *chairperson* still carries the tinge of sex discrimination.

Fortunately, Ms. Ann T. Pasto, one of the leaders of the movement, was able to come up with a solution. She suggested the use of the ending *BODY*. Members of both sexes have bodies as anyone can see, so *chairbody* should be a term without sexual bias. And so, in 1984, we speak of a chairBODY, a salesBODY, a fireBODY, the Neanderthal BODY, the huBODY race, and so on.

I wonder whether you remember the big drives in the 1980s. Their aim was to get sex discrimination out of textbooks, out of TV programs, out of biology, out of childrens' toys, out of the dictionary, out of every-

thing. "Get the MAN out of MANhattan" became the fighting slogan of the day. This spilled over into, "Get the MAN out of MANometer, MANdolin, MANchester, MANitoba, MANchuria, MANDalay, MANGrove, MANager, MANatee, MANSion, MANna, MANagua, MANDarin, and wherever else you find him.

Well, the dictionary was properly de-sexed. In the 1984 edition you don't find MAN anywhere; not even in huMAN . . . which is just as well. Unfortunately this drive had a secondary result which was completely unexpected. What was once known as the stronger sex degenerated and atrophied. Parthenogenesis replaced bisexual reproduction as the way of life, so that two sexes are no longer necessary. Reproduction is by cloning, and it is carried out in sterile laboratories by technicians in white suits.

As far as the study of biology is concerned, this is all to the good. One need no longer distinguish between sexual and asexual reproduction. Difficult concepts such as meiosis, gametogenesis, nondisjunction, sex-linkage are not even mentioned. Sex education is as outmoded as sex, and you'd be surprised at the sharp drop in rape cases and venereal disease rates.

So in 1984 things are good. We may be a little crowded population-wise, but things are good. Still, one must be on constant guard against backsliding. Even an eminent editor like yourself can easily fall into that trap, witness the final paragraph of your letter. There you speak of your MENtor-at-law. How could you allow yourself to use an archaic term that includes such a sex-oriented root as MEN? I can only assume that it is an atavistic throwback to the days of 1975. Surely you know that by 1984, MEN were rooted out of the dictionary.

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Termite Control Without Pesticides

Michigan State University microbiologist John A. Breznak has isolated bacteria which may help keep termites alive, a finding which, he says, has potential in the control of the destructive pest without the use of noxious chemical pesticides. The scientist believes the bacteria, which he has grown in test tubes, help keep termites alive by fixing the nitrogen they need in addition to wood, the insect's principal food. Nitrogen fixation is a process whereby nitrogen, the major gaseous component of the air we breathe, is transformed into ammonia, a necessary constituent of proteins.

The damage termites cause and the cost of controlling them has been reported worldwide at \$1.2 billion a year. Much of this cost is borne by home-owners.