

skills to advanced theory and practice. Where would any breakthroughs or discoveries be without some basic research that preceded them?

Second, the commitment. If the student of biology pursues a real study of biological principles from such a foundation of basics, then surely this must require a firm commitment on his/her part, a commitment of patience and tolerance. Patience to dig out from the accumulated data, sound conclusions; tolerance to review and consider prior knowledge and keep one's mind open to a new or different point of view.

This commitment to learning ideas and concepts may indeed seem at times boring and uninteresting. If, however, the learner keeps the long range view in mind—pragmatically, a career or use in everyday living, then these learning activities become a means to an end—the building blocks for future productivity and a happier existence.

The “basics” needed today are not only content of the various subject areas but three other R's—Reason, Responsibility and Rights. Reason and responsibility have been alluded to already; when these two R's are present the right to a sound education becomes a reality.

Anne Fraulo
Science Department Head
Hillhouse High School
New Haven, Connecticut 06511

“Humanizing Language:” More Reactions

I could hardly believe my eyes!

Your fiery editorial about “Humanizing Language” in the May 1978 issue of *ABT* was certainly a strong blow for womens' lib. Such positive guidelines! “Starting with this month's issue we will be using the term *s/he* as the singular personal pronoun in *ABT*; *him/her* will be the objective form; and *hers/his* the possessive form.”

But then something on page 271

caught my eye. It made my hair stand on end (what little I have left). Page 271, the very page on which this editorial concludes, carried a memorable quote from Thoreau—“If a *man* does not keep pace with *his* companions, perhaps it is because *he* hears a different drummer. Let *him* step to the music *he* hears however measured or far away.”

I really could not believe my eyes. Those guidelines—what happened to them? “My,” said I to myself. “All those sexist words! I'd better rewrite Thoreau's quote in the new *ABT* style.” And so I did. But please note that I tried to replace the generic “man” with “human” until I realized that the “man” was still there. So I substituted a new word—*hubody*. After all, language cannot remain frozen, as you say. I feel that *hubody* is quite safe because members of both sexes have bodies. And so, the quotation now reads as follows:

If a *hubody* does not keep pace with *his/her* companions, perhaps it is because *s/he* hears a different drummer. Let *him/her* step to the music which *s/he* hears however measured or far away.

Having followed the *ABT* guidelines to the letter, I felt satisfied and happy. Then I tried to READ THE QUOTE ALOUD to my wife. As I was reading I heard terrible noises and muffled groans. Later I learned that those noises were caused when Thoreau turned over in his grave. Perhaps if you try to read this quote out loud, you too will hear those groans.

How does one pronounce “s/he” when reading aloud? Is it anything like Ms. which to me sounds like an abbreviation for miserable?

Philip Goldstein
193 Lake Carol Drive
West Palm Beach, Florida 33411

Masters Responds

We have already discussed Thoreau, who must be quite tired from all of that tossing about and groaning in his grave, in the September issue of the journal.

As to pronunciation, I would pronounce “s/he” as “she” but that is a matter of individual preference. Actually the form is a way of saying “she or he, whatever the case may be.” If that doesn't satisfy those who have problems with pronouncing “s/he” I can only refer them to Victor Borge who, I am told, has a marvelous way of pronouncing “/” as well as “;” and “:”. Unfortunately I haven't had an opportunity to investigate this for myself.

May I commend you on your recent editorial, “Humanizing Language.” (*ABT* 40:5) Not only was your article interesting and well written but you offer a solution for the grammatical pronoun problem; that is, using the form *s/he* as the singular personal pronoun; *him/her* in the objective form; and *hers/his*, the possessive form.

For the sake of interest, thinking your article and idea was so good, I have discussed it with seven public school teachers and three college professors. In summary, the results are—they also agree with your idea but admitted they never viewed this issue as a major problem.

As always, *ABT* leads the other journals. Keep up the good work.

Henry J. Bindel, Jr.
George Mason University
Fairfax, Virginia 22030

E. B. White and “Humanizing Language”

In support of the ERA, the NABT has taken a 70% stand through its “proportional” vote; in support of clear prose, it has chosen to clutter up language with “s/he” and “him/her.”

The NABT has taken an equivocal stand on the principle of equality for the sexes; the journal has taken a silly stand on a grammar issue.

But the disturbing point is that you invoked E. B. White in support of

your position. As the person who revised William Strunk, Jr.'s *The Elements of Style*, E. B. White is very unlikely to agree with your addition despite his agreement that language is sensitive to our hearts and habits.

Arthur P. Cooley
341 Durkee Lane
East Patchogue, New York 11772

Editor's Response

In our response to Stroessner and Bell in September's *ABT* [40(6): 373], we did not claim to have E. B. White's support for *s/he* or *him/her*. What we did say was that we agree that inequality for women is not an

issue that will be resolved simply by changing our pronouns; it will require a change in our hearts, our attitudes, and our thinking. However, our words will serve as a reminder that we must make a conscious effort to include women in our language—not just imply that they are somewhere on the periphery of it.

Cooley's letter gives us an excellent opportunity to recommend E. B. White's 2nd edition of William Strunk, Jr.'s, *The Elements of Style* to all of our readers. The paperback edition, published by Macmillan Publishing Company, is 78 pages of concise, clear, and witty guidelines on

how to write. *ABT's* editors consider White's book a classic that should be read at least twice a month.

Joan G. Creager, *editor*
Patricia A. Masters, *assistant editor*

The stumbling way in which even the ablest of scientists in every generation have had to fight through thickets of erroneous observations, misleading generalizations, inadequate formulations, and unconscious prejudice is rarely appreciated by those who obtain their scientific knowledge from textbooks.

James Bryant Conant

STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT AND CIRCULATION

(Required by 39 U.S.C. 3685)

- Title of publication—*The American Biology Teacher*. 2. Date of Filing—5 September 1978. 3. Frequency of Issue—Monthly except June, July and August. 3A. No. of issues published annually: 9. 3B. Annual subscription price: \$18.00. 4. Location of known Office of Publication (*Street, city, county, state, zip code*) (*Not printers*)—Northern Virginia Community College, 3001 N. Beauregard St., Alexandria, Virginia 22311.
- Location of the Headquarters or General Business Offices of the Publishers (*Not printers*)—NABT, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, Virginia 22090.
- Names and complete Addresses of Publisher, Editor, and Managing Editor—
Publisher (*Name and address*)—National Association of Biology Teachers, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, Virginia 22090
Editor (*Name and address*)—Joan G. Creager, NVCC, 3001 N. Beauregard Street, Alexandria, Virginia 22311
Managing Editor (*Name and address*)—Jerry P. Lightner, NABT, 11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, Virginia 22090
- OWNER (*If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding 1 percent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a partnership or other unincorporated firm, its name and address, as well as that of each individual must be given.*)
Name—National Association of Biology Teachers—11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, Virginia 22090
(No stockholders; NABT is a non-profit 501(c)(3) association)
- Known Bondholders, Mortgagees, and other Security Holders Owning or Holding 1 Percent or more of Total Amount of Bonds, Mortgages or Other Securities (*If there are none, so state*)—NONE
- For Completion by Nonprofit Organizations Authorized to Mail at Special Rates (*section 132, 122, PSM*)
The purpose, function, and nonprofit status of this organization and the exempt status for Federal income tax purposes have not changed during preceding 12 months.
- Extent and Nature of Circulation

	average no. copies each issue during preceding 12 months	actual no. of copies of single issue published nearest to filing date
A. Total no. copies printed (<i>Net Press Run</i>)	12,614	10,800
B. Paid Circulation		
1. Sales through dealers and carriers, street vendors and counter sales	0	0
2. Mail subscriptions	10,482	10,624
C. Total paid circulation (<i>sum of 10B1 and 10B2</i>)	10,482	10,624
D. Free distribution by mail, carrier or other means Samples complimentary, and other free copies	1,652	111
E. Total Distribution (<i>Sum of C and D</i>)	12,134	10,735
F. Copies not distributed		
1. Office use, left over, unaccounted, spoiled after printing	480	65
2. Returns from news agents	0	0
G. Total (<i>Sums of E, F1 and 2—should equal net press run shown in A</i>)	12,614	10,800

I certify that the statements made by me above are correct and complete.—Jerry P. Lightner

NABT Executive Director