

Special Publications

Available from
The National Association of Biology Teachers
11250 Roger Bacon Drive, Reston, Virginia 22090

- _____ copies of *Social Implications* @\$4.00
_____ copies of *Pollution* @2.00
_____ back issues of *ABT* @\$2.00
(Please list which ones)
_____ sets of *Career Issues of The American
Biology Teacher* @\$4.00
_____ copies of *The Compendium* @\$4.00

_____ Please bill me \$_____ Amount enclosed

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

The 1980 Census

The 1980 census questionnaire will arrive in the mail on March 28, according to plans announced by the U.S. Bureau of the Census. It is important that a member of each household complete the questionnaire fully and accurately.

Biology teachers and their students have an interest in the census and the data it will provide; for example, the census will give us information on changes in:

- the rate of population growth;
- the relative numbers of people in different age categories;
- the size of family units;
- the environments in which families live;
- the educational level of the population;
- the lifestyles of Americans;
- the use of energy;
- the health needs of Americans;
- and many other items of interest to biologists.

We can help to make the 1980 census a success by cooperating fully with the request for information. We can use the results in our classes to increase our understanding of concepts about population, education, energy, and the environment.

Joan G. Creager, editor

THE WORLD OF FRESHWATER FISH
by Thomas D. Fegely. 1978. Dodd, Mead, and Company (79 Madison Avenue, New York 10016). 128 p. \$5.95 hardback.

Intended for ages 10 and up, this book could be used by anyone interested in freshwater fish. It not only has photographs of fish and some fishermen, but also includes line-drawings of the inside and outside of fish. Technical terms are used throughout and when introduced, the term is italicized and described. The book includes internal and external anatomy explaining the physiology of the unique organs. The functions that allow the fish to successfully fill its ecological niche—breathing, hearing, seeing, tasting, smelling, swimming—are explored. The behavior and enemies of fish are presented as well as a survey of North American freshwater fish, which includes territory, genus, species, and habits. Instructions are included for creating a natural setting in an aquarium for regional fish.

This well-written book emphasizes the ecology of fish, their food value, and their role in recreation. Its pages are packed with information and are easy to read. The book is a valuable reference for all libraries and could be used to intro-

duce, to inform, and to create excitement about *The World of Freshwater Fish*.

M.J. Crumlish
Neshaminy Maple Point High School
Langhorne, Pennsylvania

THE MEDUSA AND THE SNAIL

by Lewis Thomas. 1979. The Viking Press (625 Madison Avenue, New York 10022). 175 p. \$8.95.

It is a rare scientist who wins the National Book Award, as Lewis Thomas, President of Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, did in 1974 for *The Lives of a Cell: Notes of a Biology Watcher*. It is equally unusual for a scientist to write a collection of essays that becomes a best-seller as Thomas did in 1979. What is it that is unique about this man? I believe it is his ability to convey science as exciting and beautiful and scientists as human and vulnerable. Thomas is a humanistic scientist; or, if you prefer, a scientific humanist.

Thomas's second collection of essays elaborates on many of the themes presented in *Lives*. The title piece, "The Medusa and the Snail" describes the interdependency of two organisms, a tiny jellyfish and a sea slug that live in the Bay of Naples. It is a metaphorical essay be-

cause this relationship appears to Thomas "like a vaguely remembered dream . . . of the whole earth at once." We are so intricately connected with one another and with the living things that inhabit the earth with us, Thomas contends, that it is hard to tell where "we" end and "it" begins.

From this beginning, Thomas moves on to comment on the health care system, "a staggering enterprise, in any sense of the adjective." He views the unwieldy size and inefficiency of the system as symptomatic of the American obsession with "Health." We are convinced we are falling apart, and only the health care professionals through the magic of preventive medicine stand between us and disaster. Thomas says this is simply not so. Humans are adaptable and "tough" organisms, and "if we continue to listen to all the talk," the danger is that we will become a "nation of healthy hypochondriacs, living gingerly, worrying ourselves half to death." Thomas's prescription is to get on with solving the myriad *real* problems we face. It sounds like a sensible piece of advice, and we are hearing it straight from the doctor's mouth.

Particular essays always stand out as favorites in any collection. I personally want to thank Thomas for the excellent "Notes on Punctuation." I find we share a