

# Editorial

## The "Right Stuff" for Teaching Biology

Teaching biology is a difficult job. The number of people who can do the job well is, I think, relatively small. (And I like to think many of them are readers of *The American Biology Teacher*.) Your potential for teaching biology can be determined by your responses to two simple questions: do you like young people, and do you like biology? Biology teachers are a heterogeneous group, but the best ones are alike in being able to answer "yes" to both questions.

Do you like children? Do you really like all children, not just the bright, responsive ones? Youngsters often are not particularly likeable . . . they are sometimes thoughtless and self-oriented, and they succumb too readily to peer pressure. By "adult" standards, they may wear bizarre clothes. Many of them have family problems that cause them to disrupt a class or withdraw into themselves. Some are physically unattractive or painfully shy. And it's frustrating when they do not respond to our efforts to help them. But nearly all are basically good, and about the same as children have always been. If you do not enjoy working with them, it's time to go on

a sabbatical or change jobs.

Do you like biology? Does biology and teaching biology still excite you? Do you recognize the importance of biology education for solving present and future world-problems such as hunger, disease and extinction? (See Maura Flannery's column in this issue.) Are you excited about the potential of genetic engineering and other forms of biotechnology? Your students should easily detect your fascination with biology and your urgency in preparing them for a world where biological knowledge will allow men and women to go beyond what is possible with mere machines and electronics.

Clearly there is more to our jobs than just liking young people and biology. But an intelligent person with those credentials can make up for other deficiencies in background or abilities. Anyone who tries to teach biology without these credentials is doing a disservice to his or her students and community. To paraphrase Harry Truman, if you don't like the "kids" and the subject matter, get out of the classroom.

**Dan Wivagg**  
*Associate Editor*

## Because They Care ...

NABT thanks its **Sustaining Members** for their dedication to the goals of America's biology teachers. Because of their special membership, sustaining members receive discounts on advertising, exhibit space and list rentals.

**Carolina Biological  
Supply Company**  
*Burlington, NC*  
**Difco Laboratories\***  
*Detroit, MI*  
**Eli Lilly and Co.**  
*Indianapolis, IN*  
**Lab-Line  
Instruments, Inc.**  
*Melrose Park, IL*  
**Nasco, Inc.**  
*Fort Atkinson, WI*  
**National Geographic  
Society**  
*Washington, D.C.*  
**Sargent-Welch  
Scientific Company**  
*Skokie, IL*  
**Triarch, Inc.\***  
*Ripon, WI*  
**Ward's Natural  
Science  
Establishment, Inc.**  
*Rochester, NY*

\* charter sustaining member