1994 EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

First I must express appreciation to the many members of NABT who welcomed me to their organization in 1984. Your years of support and encouragement strengthened this organization and helped us develop NABT service programs never before envisioned. I hope you have found membership in NABT to be worthwhile and that our publications, conventions, workshops, and materials development projects have made significant contributions to your professional growth, and to the quality of biology and life science education.

It is with much regret that I am leaving an organization and professional family which have meant so very much to me. Current leadership has other visions, and while I don’t entirely understand or agree with them, I sincerely hope that reason will prevail and I wish them well.

Outlined below is a summary of some of our major accomplishments over the last decade:


- Membership increased from 4,400 in 1983 to 8,000 in 1994.
- Income increased from $369,000 in 1983 to $1,319,000 in 1993, an increase of nearly one million dollars.
- Assets have nearly quadrupled from $178,000 in 1983 to $662,630 in 1993.
- Staff size increased from 4 in 1983 to 17 in 1994.
- Two new office condos were purchased without the need of a mortgage, doubling the size of the work space in Reston.
- No products and only one publication were available for purchase in 1983 (“Plants in the Laboratory,” 1983). Today, we have a variety of products (videotapes, test packets, posters, totes, shirts, mugs, etc.), plus 15 monographs and 6 special publications.
- The newsletter column was taken out of ABT in 1984 and became a separate product again (News & Views); the newsletter has become a major membership service offered by our organization.
- A sponsor was found and the OBTA program was restored and expanded. In addition, seven new national award programs have been initiated.
- An Education Department was established and NABT’s first externally reviewed grant applications were funded. NABT received funds from the federal government, Foundations and private companies.
- Grant funds totaling $2,494,918 have been brought into the association since 1989. The preceding two decades only elicited a single $10,000 publication subvention to the Women’s Section.
- Numerous liaison activities were initiated that served to boost NABT into a leadership position in the science education reform movement, not the least being our involvement in the national science standards project.

We have made these accomplishments through careful management of resources while at the same time accumulating a modest reserve fund.

In this my final executive director’s report, I want to urge you to look at the process by which committees are appointed and Board positions are filled. We are no longer a “Mom & Pop” organization. Some of the procedures used in the past must be modified to insure a democratic and representative governance. As an example, six out of the eight 1994 Board members are from four-year colleges, whereas only 13% of the membership is so classified.

The Nominating Committee of three is appointed, not elected. Each year the President appoints one member to this committee. The committee provides a slate which needs no Board approval. It doesn’t take much to see how inbred this process can become.

Progress may be made in 1995 as two Regional Coordinators will be asked to serve on an enlarged Nominating Committee. This is a step in the right direction as Regional Coordinators are elected by the membership. Nevertheless, I think the members should insist on an elected Nominating Committee and a Board that represents the diverse populations and geographic areas which make up our organization.

On another matter, the 1994 budget presented to the Board last fall was in balance. The Board borrowed some money from reserves to pay for extra Board travel in 1994. The projected deficit was then increased when the Board approved $18,000 in unbudgeted expenses for the Search Committee.

With an estimated 50% increase in the new Director’s salary, this will put stress on the 1995 budget. Members should insist that leaders act in a fiscally responsible way, developing new programs after generating surpluses and not reducing our very limited reserves.

One last recommendation must be that the members be given an opportunity to petition the Board, their elected representatives, on issues they feel are important. As witnessed at the last Town Meeting, members want a greater voice in the governance of their organization. Many associations have a provision for members to bring resolutions or petitions to the Board at the annual business meeting. Such resolutions are posted well in advance and actually put to a vote at the business meeting. Members are thereby given an opportunity to instruct their representatives to carry out certain wishes. This additional provision could be added to the NABT Bylaws along with the provision for an elected Nominating Committee.

NABT should move forward and focus on some of the major issues facing the profession—the “tech prep” movement and emerging role of two-year colleges, the integrated science movement and the role of the biology teacher, development of curriculum and assessment instruments consistent with the new science standards, and the translation of research in teaching and learning to the classroom.

I am proud to have served you and respect enormously the talents, skills and fortitude of classroom biology teachers. I wish you well and many years of success in the future.

—Patricia J. McWethy, NABT Executive Director (1983-1994)