REAR VIEW MIRROR --
LOOKING BACK

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Historians, due to the nature of their profession, specialize in looking back hoping to learn something of import. However, as Historian of an active organization I’ve also got to look forward, and try to use the past to inform the future, or so it seems to me.

Everyone can learn from the past, and perhaps looking at what ACUBE (or AMCBT) has done before might help us in deciding what we might do in the future. One place to look for this data is in our past Annual Meetings (Conferences).

The early meetings of the then AMCBT were organized differently from today’s. Topics were established and discussion groups were set up. A leader was usually found who would present something in the area of discussion and then run the overall discussion.

The Third Annual Conference of AMCBT took place at the University of Notre Dame on October 16-17, 1959. The following topics were to be discussed.

1. Quality and quantity of undergraduate course work in biology and related sciences desirable for the prospective secondary school biology teacher.
2. Role of biologists in determining teacher certification requirements.
3. Honors activities for superior students in biology.
4. Undergraduate research participation and seminars for undergraduate biology students.
5. Role of college biology teachers in upgrading in-service secondary teachers in the service area of their college.
6. Undergraduate biology assistantships programs.
7. The masters degree requirements for prospective biology teachers.
8. The Specialist in Education degree requirements for prospective biology teachers.

At the Thirteenth Annual Conference of AMCBT held at Fontbonne College, St. Louis, October 16-18, 1969, an organizing theme was selected, “Biology in the Environment”, and the topics list had increased to 12, which were:

1. Recent Developments in Biology
2. Experiments that Work - Effective Labs
3. Two Types of Midwestern Field Schools
4. Field Schools Outside the United States and Extended Field Trips
5. Geoeconomy, An Experiment in Synthesis
6. Natural Areas in Iowa: Use, Management, and Preservations
7. Recent Developments in Biology
8. Two Types of Midwestern Field Schools
9. Resolved: All Bachelors Candidates in Biology are Required to Take Ecology Plus Another Biology Field Course
10. The Mississippi River Research Consortium
11. Experiments that Work - Effective Labs
12. Field Schools Outside the United States and Extended Field Trips.

Note that some of the topics were repeated indicating a particular interest in the materials presented and perhaps some difference in presentations.

By the 23rd Annual Meeting the format had undergone a significant change. The membership as a whole was invited to submit papers in areas of their interest for presentation at the Fall Meeting, and the presenters were selected from this group along with specially invited presenters. The 23rd Annual Meeting was held at Jefferson Community College in Louisville, KY on October 11-13, 1979. It’s theme was “ABC’S of the 80’s”---Articulating Biology Curricula. It also had as a major speaker, Joan Creager, then editor of the American Biology Teacher and former member of CUEBS (Commission on Undergraduate Education in Biology).

The 33rd Annual Meeting was held at Quincy College (now University) in Quincy, IL on September 28-31, 1989. The theme for this meeting was “Values of Biology”, and reflected one of the major concerns of education during this period, namely the very wide open topic of the “value” of a discipline. This theme
was stressed in a variety of ways in the papers presented, as well as in the Keynote Address, “The Value of Biology” presented by Dr. George J. Agich, Professor of Medical Humanities and Psychiatry, Southern Illinois University School of Medicine.

In the event you haven’t tried to pick up on any madness here in my presentation method (ten year increments), let’s look ahead to see what’s coming up, the 43rd Annual Meeting of ACUBE. It will be held at the University of Wisconsin, River Falls, River Falls, WI on October 15-17, 1999. The theme of this meeting is “Integrating Process and Content: Flexibility for the Future”. If you have a presentation you feel would fit, and would be willing to present same, please contact Buzz Hoagland. His address can be found in Bioscene.

Looking at the details of these past meetings (and you can get more information on these via our web site) you will note that some of the presentations have a very direct bearing on the theme, others less so. In the main, they are presentations which are designed to let you come away from the session with an idea or thought which you can expand upon, or a procedure or technique that you can adopt. All of which promotes what we were established to do: improve biology teaching.

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Contributors

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Please note that the deadline for the December 1999 issue is November 15, 1999.