Bioscene: A Brief History

In 1974, the Steering Committee created the Midwest Bioscene “as a more viable instrument than AMCBT News or the Proceedings.” AMCBT members now had a forum for sharing teaching ideas as well as techniques for field and laboratory study throughout the year. Each issue also provided current news, events of interest, available positions, and member views. The development of this publication over the past 24 years has been remarkable. The individual efforts of those who have served as editors during these formative years are recognized here.

In addition to his strong leadership role on the steering committee, John Carlock (Illinois State University) served as the first editor. These first few years were somewhat of a struggle. In “Yes, Virginia, there is a Midwest Bioscene...” he advised the members that this publication could only reflect their interests if they made contributions or provided responses. The eventual success of the Midwest Bioscene is largely due to his “energy, enthusiasm, interest, and innovation.” (Walker 1978)

In 1978, Nancy E. Walker (Rockhurst College) began a five year term as editor. She strongly supported the view that the “Midwest Bioscene exists to facilitate communication among the members of the AMCBT.” Although these issues retained newsletter attributes, she sought out longer articles from the membership and the number of graphics increased.

William Doemel (Wabash College) became interim editor in January of 1983 and began by urging members to “spend a creative evening by a warm fire and write an article for the next issue of the Midwest Bioscene.” Over the next five years, he redesigned the publication. Cover art became a part of each issue. Ed Kos (1988) wrote “All of us owe Bill a great deal for the hard work he did in changing the format of Bioscene as well as greatly improving its content.”

In 1988, John R. Jungck (Beloit College) accepted the position of editor. A number of innovations quickly followed. An editorial board was formed to assist in the development of a peer review process for submissions. Electronic publishing software enhanced both the text layout and graphics. Articles were sought at a national level as well as through the membership. In 1991, the name of the rapidly developing publication was changed to Bioscene: Journal of College Biology Teaching. In 1995, Bioscene was added to ERIC database for education searches. During the 1995-96 academic year, an archive of past proceedings, newsletters, and the Bioscene became available via the web. It was one of the earliest organizational publications accessible on the web and, as a result, Bioscene acquired a global readership.

The Bioscene continues to reflect the convictions of its past editors. Consider once again John Carlock’s early advice for success, Nancy E. Walker’s facilitated communication, William Doemel’s invitation for more articles by members, and John R. Jungck’s focus on extended community. What do you think this publication should do?

Bioscene Milestones and Editors

1974-1978 - John Carlock, Illinois State University
- 4(1) “created by your Steering Committee as a more viable instrument than AMCBT News or the Proceedings”
- “Yes, Virginia, there is a Midwest Bioscene...” response to the notorious “non-issue” published to remind organization that the editor does need something to edit...“AMCBT can respond to your interests and ideas only if you respond to the needs of the organization”
- Nancy Walker in 4(2) recognizes “John Carlock’s energy, enthusiasm, interest, and innovation”

1978-1983 - Nancy E. Walker, Rockhurst College
- “Midwest Bioscene exists to facilitate communication among the members of the AMCBT”
- Accordingly these issues retain newsletter attributes, but additional articles are sought out.

1983-1987 -- William Doemel, Wabash College
- Accepts interim editor status in 9(1) Jan 1983 “This issue is the beginning of an experiment.”
- Urges members “Why don’t you spend a creative evening by a warm fire and write an article for the next issue of the Midwest Bioscene?”
- Ed Kos 14(1) “All of us owe Bill a great deal for the hard work he did in changing the format of Bioscene as well as greatly improving its content."

1988-1997 -- John R. Jungck, Beloit College
- Ed Kos 14(1) extends welcome to John as “a member of many years (since 1967), presenter of many computer programs at Annual Meetings, and also a former editor of The American Biology Teacher."
- Formalized editorial board immediately
- Enhanced text layout and graphics
- Other developments:
  - 1991 -- Name changed to emphasize journal -- Bioscene Journal of College Biology Teaching
  - 1991 -- Instituted peer review
  - 1995 -- Bioscene added to ERIC database for education searches
  - 1995 -- Archive of Proceedings/Newsletter/and Bioscene available via the web

1998 -- Ethel Stanley, Beloit College and Timothy Mulkey, Indiana State University