

Director's Note

A major portion of this issue is devoted to the axolotl in the classroom. A variety of formats are presented, and a series of levels, ranging from the second grade of elementary school to the graduate level are included. The rationales for using axolotls varies of course according to the level of the educational experience being developed. Each of these articles does a splendid job of explaining why axolotls provide exceptional opportunities for truly practical as well as highly intellectual learning experiences.

Especially interesting to many readers will be the impact which can be achieved among young learners (e.g., 7 and 8 year-olds), as reported in the articles by Coppedge and Walden. Not only does the axolotl awaken an interest in the natural world, it also provides a focal point for discussions about man's relationship to the environment (*vis a vis* "endangered" species). In addition, as described in Coppedge's article, axolotls in the elementary school classroom provide marvelous opportu-

nities for a "first exercise in data collection." Finally, the sense of excitement axolotls can generate among friends and family contributes a valuable sense of community to the elementary school scene.

No doubt many of us can, by jogging our memory, trace our interest in science to an early age, and perhaps even all the way back to an elementary school experience!

We at the I.U. Axolotl Colony encourage you to share surplus experimental material with your local public schools. Our experience has led us to believe that public school teachers are eager to have demonstration projects. Recall, axolotls, being aquatic, are easy to maintain in bookshelf aquaria (that is one of the major reasons they were favored by earlier generations of embryologists). Providing them with axolotls (e.g., embryos or juveniles) and photocopies of some of the articles in this issue will have a highly leveraged effect on cultivating science as an integral component of the next generation's value structure.

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