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# What Do I Do Now, Teacher?????

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Did you ever feel like saying, "Punt!!"? The writer has, and would like to tell you why. Fifteen years of science fairs has brought me into contact with excitement, danger, success, failure, and freakishness such as never could be known if the spontaneity and creativity of youth had not been challenged. The writer is not sure whether science fairs are necessary or not. Sometimes, after they are over, the justification for another is like hitting yourself on the head with a hammer because it feels so good when you stop. Let's go back, readers, to some things in the past.

Recall the time a student made a working model of FREEDOM SEVEN in his basement. The afternoon of the eve of the science fair he finds the model is 4.5 feet wide and the door out of his basement is 3.5 feet wide. He takes his father's radial saw and makes a hole in the portal. Who do you suppose went into orbit?

Come with me to visit the boy who wants to study genetics and selects hamsters. He keeps it up for a year and ends with 1,345 hamsters. He asks me if I would like to have his hamsters since he was now finished with the project. I didn't know he had kept them all alive, so I said, "Yes!" I was out of town the week he unloaded them in my lab. The janitor

had a mild stroke. I never could get rid of all of them.

Are you familiar with the reproductive habits of white mice? Come with me as the principal gives me "holy ned" for allowing one of my students to pass out candy cigars as he was about to become a papa and then it never happened, and I was asked how come the mama kept alternately getting large and then small and never delivering.

How would you like to coax a hamster out of a heating duct of a furnace at 3 a.m. . . . A frantic mother threatens if you don't succeed.

Recall the time a budding scientist wishes to study why it is possible for a fish to withstand freezing. She thinks she will remove the tissue fluids and check their freezing point. Fine, but she uses her mother's food blender to cut up some bullheads.

The student who has five aquariums to keep crayfish she is studying happy and finds she has only one aerator is doing fine as long as her dad gets up every hour on the hour during the night to change aerators. He finally calls and I agree.

You tell a student to handle her project with "kid gloves," and you get a call from an irate parent asking where he is going to get a pair of gloves made out of baby-goat-skin.

The late evening of a cool winter's night finds you visiting the shore of a nearby stream about five miles from town to observe a sampling technique. When you return to the automobile, it won't start. The young lady calls her father from a farm house two miles away to which you and she have trudged. Her father gets out a special car to come get you. He slips behind the wheel of the non-starting car, turns the key and the car starts. Silence reigns all the way home.

You have a student working with estrogen and its effects on plant growth. I know it is an animal hormone. He tries it on the family dog and produces somewhat of an inversion. It turns out to be a pampered dog and you almost get your papers. Walking, that is.

A student writes to an eastern firm dealing in metals and asks for a few samples of such things as gold, arsenic, platinum, and uranium. Your principal receives a note from the head of the firm asking what kind of Pandora's box does he think exists that he allows his science teacher to encourage his students to write such letters. I submit a letter . . . you know. . . .

Another student wishes to build a jet engine. He is getting along fine and one evening asks me to watch it operate. I have suggested alcohol for a fuel in the past. The machine does not operate. My student asks me to check from the rear to see if the spark plug is operating. Unknown to me is the fact that he has laced the alcohol with ether. I go behind to take

a look. He starts the compressor. I look in and it takes off—my eyebrows, my hair (what I have left) and a few patches of flesh. The boy is a jet engineer today. I am a bit balder and wiser.

What else is there? A great many things I could relate, but most of all it feels so good when you stop hitting yourself with that hammer that I think I'll try it again next year. They are necessary, you know, for you and for young people everywhere.

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(OUTDOOR—continued from page 8) in outdoor education will provide leadership, instruction, and information.

A group camp program designed to teach nature conservation to grade-school children is planned. The camp, to be located where it will not be overrun by the general recreationist, will be staffed by a trained counselor who will teach regular subjects but will relate them to the out-of-doors setting.

A nature museum where visitors, including handicapped individuals, can touch, see, and actually hear Iowa's wildlife is planned. Interpretive facilities will include exhibits showing Iowa's pioneer history, prehistoric animals, archaeology, soil conservation, forestry, botany, birds and mammals, ecology, geology, and astronomy.

Floral gardens, inspiration and meditation gardens, nature areas, and an outdoor amphitheater will be developed as part of an esthetic education program.