To the Editor:

I appreciate Mr. Hlebowitsh's not-unexpected comments, but I stand by my review. His book, while interesting and provocative, *is* shrill, and this is surprising in something purporting to be a history. My characterizations of the book, which he sees as irresponsible, were documented by as many references to his own words as I could manage in my 500-word limit. I'm puzzled by his use of the term "lurid" in describing my characterization of his book (a welcome colorful addition to our pale vocabulary of curriculum discourse but not, I think, a term that fits my comments), but I repeat what I said in my review: a claim is not evidence and we should expect, in history, argument from evidence.

Normally when I write reviews for public consumption, I do accentuate the positive, and I initially tried to do so with this one. But while the author may not actually have been angry when he wrote it, the angry, even hostile, tone is built into the simplifications and sweeping statements that do in fact make this book such a lively read. The anger is an unfortunate constant distraction, because, as I said in my review, there is a lot of interesting material in this book; if it were truly a calm history of radical curriculum thinking, it could be terrific.

Mr. Hlebowitsh clearly has the stuff to do this, and I wish he had. He doesn't remember it, but we have met, at a Professors of Curriculum meeting not long ago. I liked him and I've been impressed: his work with that group, for instance, has been upbeat, responsible, collegial, thoroughly enjoyable. I wish the book had reflected the first three of these qualities, but it was nonetheless enjoyable, a stimulating and provocative treatise. Readers will make their own judgments; I may well be in a minority. In any event, I wish Peter Hlebowitsh the best. He has made a notable addition to curriculum literature that should stimulate lively discussion.

Elizabeth Vallance
The Saint Louis Art Museum

Editorial Note: Letters to the editor are published verbatim.