

From the Editor

Exciting Science in Middle Schools



In his biography *Steve Jobs*, Walter Isaacson describes how a single elementary school teacher could inspire a kid to study math and science. During those same formative years, Jobs's neighborhood was filled with engineers who could discuss nifty science topics with young Steve. While today's average school kid may not have such influences, the fact remains that Steve Jobs turned toward math and science before high school. Interest in science should be kindled during middle school so that students will take appropriate courses in high school in preparation to study science in college.

Thomas Friedman, in *The World is Flat*, describes globalization in many ways, including as an opportunity for American ingenuity to supply the ideas that could shape our future. He also, however, quotes from a National Science Board report that 30 years ago the U.S. ranked 3rd in the world for the number of college students who received science degrees; today we are 17th on that list.

The problem goes deeper. While only about 5% of our population has a career in science or engineering, many people believe our society's economic well-being depends on the citizenry having some knowledge of math and science. The demands of future job opportunities are likely to require more skill in math and science. Moreover, it is important that members of the general public possess some knowledge of science; science should not be feared but rather viewed as a rational and objective way to understand the world around us.

We have heard these dire statistics for years, and many people ask what can be done about these trends. In this issue's *Microscopy Education* article, Caroline Schooley reviews the success of Project MICRO, the Microscopy Society of America's middle school outreach project. For 20 years Project MICRO has been using microscopy to spark science interest in middle school students. Schooley makes the case that everyone working in microscopy can make a difference.

Charles Lyman
Editor-in-Chief

Editor's Comment: Concerning the March editorial, a reader wrote that Rosalind Franklin should have been mentioned in connection with the determination of the double-helix structure of DNA. While Franklin worked in Wilkins's laboratory and made critical contributions, the purpose of that paragraph in the editorial was to describe some of the Nobel Prizes won in the field of X-ray diffraction. She died several years before the Nobel Prize was awarded for this work.

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