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Publishing without Review

Abelson's point is very well taken in his editorial "Information exchange groups" (11 Nov., p. 727). I am familiar with a number of similar expedients to beat, so to speak, the system of adequate review and responsible authorship. He did not mention them, but there are two other ways to circumvent review. One is the publication in book form of papers given at symposia and the other, the "transactions" published by some engineering societies. The latter are open to discussion but, in the meantime, one can have just about anything printed. Fortunately, symposia proceedings are usually very slow in coming out and are not attractive as a medium. He also did not mention a cause for preferment of unreviewed and unedited publication media: the need for gathering what the trade knows as "brownie points" under the "Publish or Perish" system.

As I see it, the only solution is the speeding up of publication in reputable journals and increasingly incisive screening. Also, we need administrative policies of government agencies and universities toward the suppression of quasi-journals. I would welcome continued editorial focus on this problem in your columns.

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Spreading the Gospel

By coincidence, shortly before reading Van Vleck's letter ("Population stabilization," 7 Oct.), I talked to two high school biology classes about the need to stabilize human populations. I can attest that such concepts, including birth control, were accepted with aplomb by sophomores. In fact, I am convinced that the high school biology course is an ideal place to introduce this problem. When it follows the study of the simple principles of animal and plant ecology such as is found in many texts, especially the Biological Sciences Curriculum Study texts, population control is quite comprehensible to the student. He can understand why man has instinctively been so diligent and successful in turning his efforts to death control, and has been reluctant to interfere with his own reproduction. The conflict becomes apparent and leads to the conclusion



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