

Cookie Sales Aid Study of Ecology



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Harold Silverstein instructing students during the marine-ecology class at John Dewey High School.

By ARI L. GOLDMAN

The Board of Education allocates about 50 cents a student for the experimental materials used in the summertime marine-ecology class at John Dewey High School in Brooklyn.

Equipped with a variety of sophisticated instruments, the 102 students in this year's summer program collected organisms, took bacterial counts and measure temperature, salinity, chlorinity, water visibility, current flow and rock formations at various beaches in Brooklyn and Queens. The tab came to \$17.50 a student.

Cookies and candy made the difference.

During the last school year marine-biology students at John Dewey raised \$2,000 by selling boxed cookies and candy to pay for dissecting and other gear and necessary chemicals.

Off to the Beach

Three days a week, the students dug up and splashed at Plum Beach in Brooklyn, Jones Beach and the Rockaways. The class, which was divided into groups of five students each, collectively gathered organisms, conducted experiments and recorded its findings in the form of group reports.

According to Harold Silverstein, marine-biology coordinator at John Dewey, "There is no required reading list, and the grades are on a pass-fail basis." His aim is to make his students "aware of man's interrela-

tionship with the environment."

In the students' opinion, the main cause of pollution in the areas that they visited is the lack of adequate sewage-treatment facilities. Another source of pollution, they concluded, are the beer cans and garbage strewn along the beaches. Beer cans not only cause visual pollution, one student commented, but chemicals in the beer and the rust from the cans cause organic disorder as well.

The beach excursions were complemented by classroom and laboratory study two days a week at the high school, at 50 Avenue X. Organisms found at sea are grown in the school aquarium; these, in turn, are used for class study.

Out of the Tank

"When we study a specific organism in class," Mr. Silverstein said, "we just pull it out of the tank. This method of learning has great advantages over a sketch on the blackboard or a movie of the organism. The students can actually see the behavioral patterns—from reproduction through development."

Harvey B. Friedman, one of the students, said he had put to practical use some of the marine-ecology techniques he had learned in class. "I go out fishing a lot, and what I've learned helps me determine what to use as bait and how deep the fish are under the boat," he observed.

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