



Ask Mr. Science— Explosives in the Elementary Classroom

Al Hovland, associate professor of chemistry, regularly visits elementary schools in St. Mary's County to encourage an interest in science. Sometimes the students respond with letters of appreciation. As you read the following examples, don't let youthful spelling blind you to the tremendous excitement that has been generated.

Dear Dr. Hovland,

Thank you for coming to visit and for showing us experiments. When you put vinegar and baking soda in a bottle and it blew up in the air and I liked it.

Your friend,
Drew (Hollywood, 2nd grade)

Dear Dr. Hovland,

It was nice for you to come to Banneker to present your speech to the kids who wanted to be a scincast. Did you know I did the marker experiment. I liked you the most because I learned more of my favorite subject science. I learned that the brown marker was made of many different colors. I thought it was just one color. I would like to be a scincast so I loved learning about the chemicals. I have my own science kit with clothes how to make your own goggles and some experiments. I wish to be a scientist when I grow up. Thank you very much. I loved your speech.

Your science lover,
Shana (Banneker, 3rd grade)

Dear Mr. Hovland,

I am going to go to St. Mary's College after high school. I like the part in the show when you shot the cork. Hope to see you in college.

Sincerely,
Steven (Hollywood, 3rd grade)

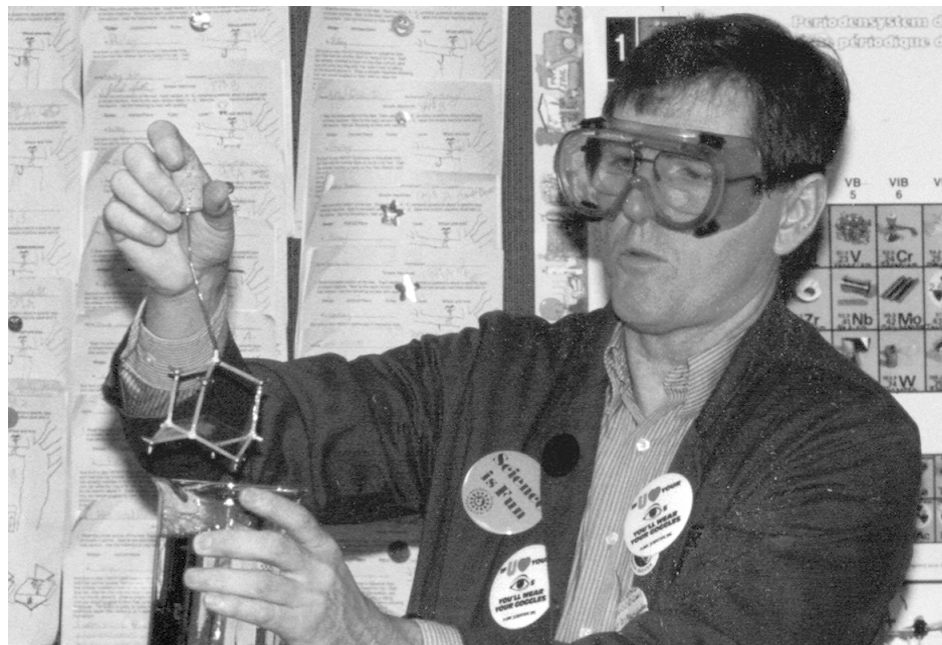
Dear Mr. Hovland

I liked all of the science experiments you did but the one I really liked was the home-made slime. It is easy to make 3 simple steps and that was put glue in bag. Then you add water and mix it together. Now I can make it every day.

Future scientist,
John (Town Creek, 5th grade)

Dear Mr. Hovland,

I really enjoyed your experiments and want to see them again. My favorite one was the water that changed colors. I thought it was cool that when you added just one sub-



Chemistry professor Al Hovland demonstrates bubbleology to a class of fifth graders. The children particularly appreciate Dr. Hovland's lab coat of many buttons and his baking soda and vinegar explosions.



stance to the water it changed magenta. When you added another substance it changed back to clear. Thank you for coming into my class and showing us your skills.

Sincerely,
Elise (Town Creek, 5th grade)

Dear Mr. Hovland,

I liked it when you came to my class room. I liked that experiment we did with the glue it was cool but when I got home it started to turn into yellow stuff is that mold?

Sincerely,
Eileen (Town Creek, 5th grade)

Dear Mr. Hovland,

I'm happy you came to my science class and you taught me more about matter. Plus I now that there are three states of matter gas, liquids, solids. My favorite part was when you put baking soda in a bottle and added vinegar in the bottle and put on a corkscrew and when you shook it up it blow out of the whole.

Sincerely,
Ali (Town Creek, 5th grade)

Exemplary Model for Higher Ed

St. Mary's College and certain Swedish universities are where public colleges and universities in this country should be heading. That, at any rate, is the opinion of Brown University's Futures Project: Policy for Higher Education in a Changing World.

In a recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* (Oct. 14, 2002), director Frank Newman and associate director Lara Couturier describe the results of a study commissioned by the Futures Project. The study looked at the following problem: How can public colleges and universities simultaneously remain financially viable while fulfilling worthy social goals?

In a market-driven economy, Newman and Couturier note, the impulse is for colleges and universities to focus mainly on ventures which make money and to turn their backs on expensive and unprofitable disciplines and programs. Legislatures, often faced with large budget deficits, simultaneously want colleges to reduce their costs while meeting the (often expensive) needs of the state. It costs more, for instance, to reach out to and educate disadvantaged students.

More efficiency is possible, the authors say, if legislatures grant colleges and universities more autonomy, including freedom from bureaucratic regulations. A balancing act is necessary, however, since states must continue to hold colleges and universities accountable for serving the public good. Newman and Couturier look to Sweden and St. Mary's City for successful examples of semi-autonomy:

"Take, for example, the semiprivate foundation universities in Sweden and the autonomous relationship enjoyed by St. Mary's College of Maryland. Those institutions negotiated greater flexibility while being held to high standards of performance. St. Mary's, for example, enjoys freedoms in the areas of tuition setting, program approval, and employment decisions—while agreeing to raise external revenues and stick by its public mission of accessibility, quality, and diversity. Nearly a decade later, external evaluators, as well as those inside the institutions, have declared both experiments successful, citing high academic standards, improved reputations, and entrepreneurial cultures. The 'exemplary institution' status of the Colorado School of Mines, just established this year, will be another model to watch."