3 October 1994

TO: Bill Bruner, for the Library
Lynne Taylor, for Lab Stores
Fred Tabbutt, for the Chemistry Dept.
Walter Niemiec, for the Lab Building

FROM: Burt Guttman

SUBJECT: Molecular models

The Library owns a number of ball-and-stick molecular model kits (QD 480.M6 and .M58). They are simple-minded, inaccurate, dumb--and incredibly valuable. I probably use them every year, or at least every other year, to teach students elementary ideas about the structure of molecules, especially biomolecules. However, the kits have been getting worse and worse every year; since they are made of many little parts, they are steadily depleted. Half the boxes on the shelf are now empty. Since they are used by classes of students who tend to exchange parts, and since no one has the time or energy to keep them neat, the kits that do exist contain all kinds of mixtures.

Every year, I hold my breath when I go to check out more kits, wondering whether there will still be any left. I wonder if we can do something about these kits, so we always have a good supply of good them, in good condition. My questions take these forms:

1. Does anyone ever use them except for faculty members teaching as I do? If not, then is there any good reason to keep them in the Library?

2. Could they be kept in Lab Stores? Could the Lab Stores people handle them, monitor them, and keep them in any better condition than they are now?

3. Could we (the Library? Lab Stores? indirect costs money from grants? Walter's general budget?) buy some more?

I look forward to hearing from all of you.