

Quadruplets Wanted

Twins, triplets, Siamese twins, quadruplets, all may get an especially cordially invitation to the Chicago World's Fair in 1933, if the plans of Dr. H. H. Newman of the University of Chicago are followed.

Dr. Newman is a member of the biological committee which is planning science features for the exhibition. He believes that the fair offers a remarkable opportunity for science to get in touch with duplicate human beings. It is now realized that many problems of human physiology and behavior can be profitably attacked by study of human duplicates. Identical twins reared apart, for example, show in what ways environment does and does not alter an individual. Such separated twins are extremely rare.

Dr. Newman advocates establishing a bureau of twin research, and he believes that if many twins and triplets come to the Chicago exhibit, they could be shown the importance of helping science with their cases.

Anthropology

Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Evolutionist Honored

Lamarck, the great French scientist of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, who was Darwin's precursor in the field of evolution, is to have a memorial erected on the site of his birthplace by a committee of the Société Linneenne du Nord de la France. For nearly a hundred years after his death in 1829, he had no other monument than the house where he was born, in Bazentin, a village of the Somme. This was in the path of the heaviest fighting during the war and was completely demolished. The proposed monument is to be surrounded by a garden in which all the plants which have been named in honor of Lamarck or studied by him during his lifetime will be grown.

Evolution

Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Snow Fighters

Each countryside will have an organization of snow fighters, ready like a city fire department to get out on short notice day or night, if the plans outlined in a report to the American Road Builders' Association are carried out.

"Success depends on catching the snow before it is too deep or packed solid by traffic," the report explains. "Work should proceed on a definite plan and each man know his duties. The important roads should be open-

ed up first. At the beginning of the snow season equipment should be placed at strategic points for snow removal."

Prevention of drifts is the greatest part of the program of snow-fighting. Engineers find that anything that causes a reduction in the velocity of the air carrying the snow will cause drifts, and recommend various measures from cutting weeds along the edge of the road to changing the location of the road itself, if topographic features nearby cause the snow to pile up unavoidably on the highway.

Temporary snow fences to make the snow drift in harmless places are found very efficient if carefully placed, the committee finds, and their use supplemented by scraping with high-speed trucks equipped with straight blade plows will keep traffic moving through the winter.

"The last ten years have seen a vast snow removal program inaugurated in the 36 so-called snow states," says the report. "Nowhere else in the world outside of cities is there anything to compare with it. The chief reason is found in the fact that the 22,000,000 people living in these states own two-thirds of all the automobiles in the world."

Engineering

Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Great Flood Dated

Ancient inscriptions unearthed from the ruins of Kish are confidently expected to set the date of the Great Flood of Biblical fame. A report just received from L. C. Watelin, field director of the Field Museum-Oxford University Joint Expedition to Mesopotamia, describes the discovery of the tablets and explains their extraordinary significance.

The inscriptions were taken out of a deeply buried layer of the ruins, the same layer which shows traces of having been inundated by a serious flood. The inscriptions now await a reading by Prof. Stephen Langdon of Oxford, the director-general of the expedition. If the writings fail to contain a specific date, Prof. Langdon will be able to fix the date approximately by study of the form of characters used by the scribes. This is possible because other writings have been found at the site. From study of these tablets, Prof. Langdon has identified the various forms of hieroglyphics employed in the different stages of the city's turbulent history.

The expedition has introduced an

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innovation into archaeological digging by applying modern hydraulic engineering methods on a large scale. Huge volumes of subterranean water are encountered about fifty feet below the original surface of the Kish mound. Hitherto, archaeology has had to give up when it met the water level. At Kish a large motor-driven pump has been connected with extensive pipe lines installed over a large area of the city site below the present water level.

After the water has been pumped away, digging will be resumed, and it is expected that the depth of excavations will exceed any ever made in Mesopotamia. Interest in these lowest levels is keen because the expedition did reach virgin soil in one small section, about sixty feet down, and just above this were found traces of Stone Age men who must have been the first inhabitants of the site.

Archaeology

Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Fruit Fly

The first warm weather in the South will see a renewal of the warfare waged by federal and state forces against the Mediterranean fruit fly after its discovery in central Florida in April, 1929.

So far as is now known, the outlying points of infestation discovered during the campaign of last spring and summer in Florida have been cleared of their last fly, and the area where the insect is likely to be seen again this year has been reduced to the territory where it was first discovered and where its initial development in this country probably took place. But federal entomologists do not feel that it will be safe to let these outlying areas go uninspected, because of the possibility that a few insects may have overwintered in some hidden corner. A single female laying a batch of eggs could start one of these infestations all over again.

In spite of the fact that not a single fly has been seen in Florida since last fall, it will be necessary to have a full force of men in the original infested area when the breeding season returns. The pest hibernates invisibly within any one of a number of fruits and vegetables, and even a series of chill nights much colder than Florida experi-

SCIENCE FIELDS

ences in the winter will not kill off all the brood.

The inspection force will need to be at work in the great peach belt of Georgia as well as in the citrus and truck regions of Florida. Peaches are just as fair game to the hungry grubs of the fruit fly as are oranges and grapefruit, and if the fly should once get started in Georgia it would not only work havoc in the peach orchards, but would be in a much more favorable position to begin a westward march than it now is, in its confined area within the Florida peninsula.

The Mediterranean fruit fly has become such a controversial matter in Florida, that the House Appropriations Committee purposes to hold exhaustive hearings in an effort to find out whether further government money for eradication work should be withheld.

President Hoover has recommended a special appropriation of fifteen million dollars. Department of Agriculture specialists say that the situation is precarious, and that unless more work is done now, previous eradication efforts may prove to have been in vain.

Some members of Congress, Rep. William R. Wood, of Indiana, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, among them, are not convinced of the necessity of more money for the fight against the fruit fly.

The men who hold the purse-strings in Congress have decided that they will go right to the scene of the Mediterranean fruit fly's activities in Florida, before deciding definitely whether or not fifteen million more dollars are needed to suppress the activities of this insect.

By means of a resolution introduced by Chairman Wood of the House Appropriations Committee, the Chairman would be empowered to appoint a subcommittee to go to Florida and look the whole situation over. This resolution is expected to receive favorable action.

Entomology
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Streamlined Air Passages

Money can be saved coal mine operators if they will smooth up and realign underground air passage ways, the University of Illinois Engineering Experiment Station announced.

"More power is required to force air through tunnels blocked with reinforcements and jagged walls than through those which have been more or less "streamlined", Cloyde M. Smith, research associate, reported.

In many cases five or more horsepower was required to force air the length of a city block. Since long passage ways must be kept open for years to furnish enough air to distant workings each minute, the saving becomes considerable.

Engineering
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Smallpox

Serious concern is felt by state health officers over the unusual prevalence of smallpox which has existed in the middle western states since the first of the year, shown in reports received at the U. S. Public Health Service in Washington. The latest reports are that there were 269 cases in Ohio, 226 in Indiana, 147 in Illinois, 108 in Iowa, 60 in Missouri, 90 in Michigan and 38 in Wisconsin. Vaccination is a sure preventive of this loathsome and dangerous disease. Communities in which universal vaccination is the rule need not fear outbreaks of smallpox.

Medicine
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

French Scientists in Berlin

German scientists who are interested in the growth of friendly relations of Germany with France are welcoming the announcement of the French Ambassador to Germany, M. de Margerie, that his government will establish an institute in Berlin, to be the headquarters of French scientists conducting their researches there. M. de Margerie has himself been very active in promoting the enterprise. The institute, when established, will be placed under the direction of Professor Mesnard.

General Science
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Radio In Every Room

Every school child in Shelby, Mich., is within constant touch with the outside world, or the voice of the superintendent of the schools, since a radio system for Shelby schools was dedicated and put into service on January 29.

Every schoolroom has three or more loud speakers placed in its walls and ceiling and the teacher has the choice of two programs or silence at any time.

Radio—Education
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930

Safe Refrigerators

Speaking at Panama City in the tropics where refrigeration is such a great boon to health and comfort, Dr. Arnold Kegel, Health Commissioner of Chicago, at a meeting of the Pan-American Medical Association discussed factors which would make mechanical refrigerators safe for domestic use.

In Chicago, where 10 deaths and 29 cases of illness occurred recently from methyl chloride escaping from domestic refrigeration systems, the Department of Health has recommended an ordinance by which the amount of leakage from such a refrigerator that may occur into any habitable room is limited to two pounds in 12 hours, Dr. Kegel said.

"As a result of the consideration of this requirement in Chicago, four distinct types of safety features have already been suggested and in part put into practical operation, which when fully developed and put on a manufacturing basis will undoubtedly result in the construction of plants in which the common health hazards are eliminated," Dr. Kegel said.

Besides requiring the construction of a refrigerator which can not leak more than the specified amount, another important provision from a health standpoint is a regulation that all the toxic or poisonous refrigerants used in domestic refrigerators should have a distinct and easily recognizable odor in the small concentrations in air at which they are found to be poisonous to experimental animals after 12 hours' exposure, Dr. Kegel observed.

Because there are certain common locations of leaks, the construction of these refrigerators should be such that dangerous leaks are prevented by either shutting down of the system completely or by a type of construction that will conduct the escaping gas at any location to the outside air. Over three-fifths of the leaks in these refrigerators were found to occur around and in the evaporator; one-fifth of the leaks were in and around the compressor; and less than one-fifth were found in the refrigerant lines.

"The requirement for rigidity and immobility of the refrigerant-containing parts is very essential in the prevention of dangerous leaks," Dr. Kegel stated. Rigid construction and anchoring of the evaporator in the refrigerator cabinet, and of the cabinet itself, are important requirements tending to prevent leaks.

Public Health
Science News-Letter, February 8, 1930