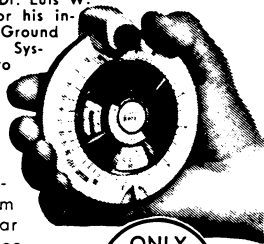


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LETTERS

To the Editor

The New Sound

Sir: I thought you might like to hear from an old-time reader of SCIENCE NEWS who got out of the habit but quickly returned to the fold upon seeing the new look in the July 15 issue.

More than the new look, I like the new sound. Reading the articles makes me realize again what a beautifully expository language plain English is. For instance, the Central Arizona Project is of interest to me and I have read all the editorials and bombast, but only after reading your article do I feel I really understand the situation. It presents all sides without taking sides, tots up facts and figures, and gives everyone concerned his due.

Your writers and editors are to be congratulated.

Ralph Gray
Editor, School Bulletin
National Geographic Society
Washington, D.C.

Skyscraper and Pyramid

Sir: Your article on Japan's skyscrapers (SN: 7/22) mentioned that the new Kasumigaseki Building is 441 feet high. Architect-engineer Sei Nikai observed that this was the exact height of Egypt's first pyramid, built in 2600 B.C. The Encyclopedia Americana states that the Great Pyramid of Khufu (2590 B.C.) rose originally about 481.5 feet.

Kenneth Larson
Los Angeles, Calif.

Special Effort

Sir: We would like you to know how very much we appreciated having Miss Patricia McBroom with us at our annual meeting in Detroit this May.

We were most especially pleased, of course, with her story based on our East-West symposium (SN: 5/27) and it seems that she was the only one of the science reporters willing to tackle it seriously.

But we have come to expect this kind of special effort from Science Service people and it is most comforting.

We hope Miss McBroom will be with us at many another annual meeting.

J. Martin Myers, M.D., Chairman
Public Information Committee
American Psychiatric Association
Washington, D.C.

Captan Defended

Sir: The article entitled, "Fungicide Danger" (SN: 6/17) implies that the present tolerances for Captan may pose a threat to human health. The work to which Dr. Legator refers was done using tissue culture and not intact animals; to the best of our knowledge tissue culture work has not been correlated with results from tests using intact animals. There is no evidence to our knowledge that genetic changes have been seen in intact animals which can be related to Captan. Further, chemicals such as caffeine can cause chromosomal alterations in tissue culture systems. Yet, coffee has been used for generations with no evidence of adverse genetic effects.

The contention that Captan is a teratogenic agent is based on results obtained in chick embryos. This test system is notorious for the number of materials which will cause teratogenic effects, among them inert materials such as carbon particles and colloidal alumina. Finally, Captan has been thoroughly tested in rabbits, chickens and rats for teratogenic activity and no such effects have been reported.

Dr. James L. Goddard, the FDA Commissioner, has been quoted in a BUSINESS WEEK article of May 13, 1967 as stating that FDA is not contemplating any action to stop the use of Captan or any other fungicides, at least for now. Also, FDA has not indicated that there is any need to change the tolerance limits for Captan, nor have they indicated that it is not safe to use as an agricultural fungicide.

In your article of June 17, the implication expressed is that the studies reported indicate that a danger exists from the use of Captan as an agricultural fungicide. The implication given should have been that there is no correlation between these laboratory tests and actual human or animal response.

W. G. Toland, Manager, R & D
Chevron Chemical Co.
Richmond, Calif.

(Though Dr. Goddard may indeed have said, in May, that he had no evidence on which to base a ban against Captan, at the research level in his agency and elsewhere the genetic effects of that substance and others, including caffeine, have been and still are, under rigorous examination and review. Ed.)