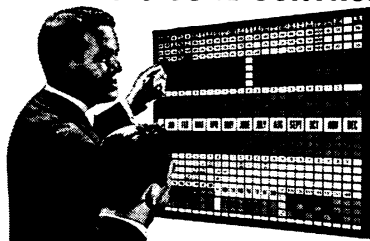


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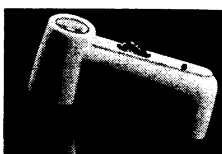
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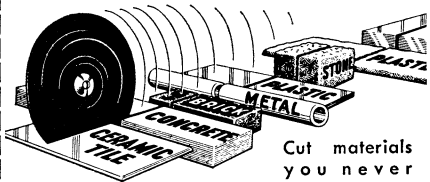
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LETTERS

to the editor

Funding science institutions

Sir:

We appreciate the attention which you have given to the pending institutional grant bill (SN: 6/22, p. 591). As you know it is currently in a state which needs considerable discussion and, quite probably, revision. However, the area is of sufficient importance that we felt a thorough airing should be given to it at this time.

George P. Miller
Chairman

Committee on Science
and Astronautics
House of Representatives

New, old experience

Sir:

The progress toward presence of fathers at childbirth (SN: 6/15, p. 567) is most heartening.

However, some of the research reported may support conclusions different from those drawn. In Dr. Tanzer's study, 40 women were observed, 20 who chose anesthesia and 20 who chose natural childbirth. Of the latter, 11 had their husbands present at delivery. Dr. Tanzer reported that those who chose natural childbirth, and especially those whose husbands were present, enjoyed childbirth more and found it a more rewarding experience.

Is it possible that couples who would choose to be present and conscious at childbirth differ in important ways from those who would not? Might such couples be younger, more open to new sense impressions and experiences (marijuana users?)

If the proposal is to allow fathers to be present at childbirth, perhaps a better experiment would randomly divide fathers who would like to be present

into those who will be permitted to and those who will not. If the couples permitted to be together at childbirth have a better experience than those who are not, the case for the proposal is strengthened. Those who would not accept the option if offered are not in the relevant population.

The data reported by Dr. Tanzer suggest to me that those who seek joy in new experiences tend to find it.

Joseph B. Kadane
Department of Statistics
Yale University
New Haven, Conn.

(All of the women in Dr. Tanzer's study were given an extensive battery of psychological tests and no relevant differences between the two groups emerged. But it is quite possible that the tests did not tap salient attitudes in this case. Random division of the parents would give stronger evidence; the difficulty is preserving their freedom of choice in such a test. Ed.)

Language on language

Sir:

Thank you very much for the report of our project (on language styles). I am pleased with the way the work was reported (SN: 6/8, p. 555). The link-up with the Harvard study of ethnic differences is very pertinent.

Alexander Thomas, M.D.
Professor of Psychiatry
New York University
School of Medicine
New York, N.Y.

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