

LETTERS

# to the editor

## Accurate observation

Your report of our observation of optical radiation from a pulsar (SN: 2/1, p. 111) was not only one of the first in print but also one of the most accurate and detailed. The accuracy of quotation is especially appreciated.

If this is typical of your science news coverage then you certainly keep your readers well informed about current developments in science.

*Dr. W. J. Cocke  
Dr. M. J. Disney  
Dr. D. J. Taylor  
Steward Observatory  
University of Arizona  
Tucson, Ariz.*

## Ecological honesty

Your editorial and feature article in (SN: 2/8, p. 132, 134) were of particular interest to me, as I have made about a dozen forays into the South American rain forest for journalistic enterprises of one sort or another.

The sudden spurt of concern for Amazonia can only be described as thrilling to a conservationist, but frankly one aspect of the note of alarm puz-

zles me. I have seen how devastating man's presence can be in isolated pockets of the tropical rain forest. But it is possible to fly over the forest hour after hour in a small plane without seeing any sign of human occupation. The tropical rain forest is a fragile community, but there's an awful lot of it down there. There must be millions of acres that have never felt the foot of a human. Perhaps in future issues your man in Amazonia will explain why the whole forest is in peril.

I believe that now is the time to do the research, but I wonder if the cries of alarm are really honest.

*Alan Mark Fletcher  
Science Editor  
J. B. Lippincott Company  
Philadelphia, Pa.*

## Went and Stark

I was pleased to see in your article (SN: 2/8, p. 134) that you considered the mycorrhiza work of Dr. Stark and myself so important. We, ourselves, of course, are completely convinced of this, but it is nice to find that others agree. It was unfortunate that Dr. Stark was unable to participate personally at the meeting in Colombia.

*Dr. F. W. Went  
Professor of Botany  
Desert Research Institute  
Reno, Nev.*

I appreciate your kindness in forwarding the copy of SCIENCE NEWS to me. The report on my paper (SN: 2/8, p. 134) is correct, although I hope I did not imply that the soils contained, "no stored soluble plant nutrients." I meant it to imply that the soil contained almost no stored soluble plant nutrients. I thank you for a faithful job of reporting and for bringing to the attention of the scientific public a serious problem worthy of broad attention. This is the type of article which we want graduate students to read.

*Dr. Nellie Stark  
Research Associate  
Desert Research Institute  
Reno, Nev.*

## Bone loss

This is with reference to an interesting article which appeared under Space Medicine in the Aerospace section (SN: 1/18, p. 69). This states that a technique has been developed for measuring the appreciable drop in calcium content of the bones of astronauts caused by long periods of weightlessness.

An apparently novel application occurred to me in the field of biological evolutionary theory, as a means of set-

(See p. 230)

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