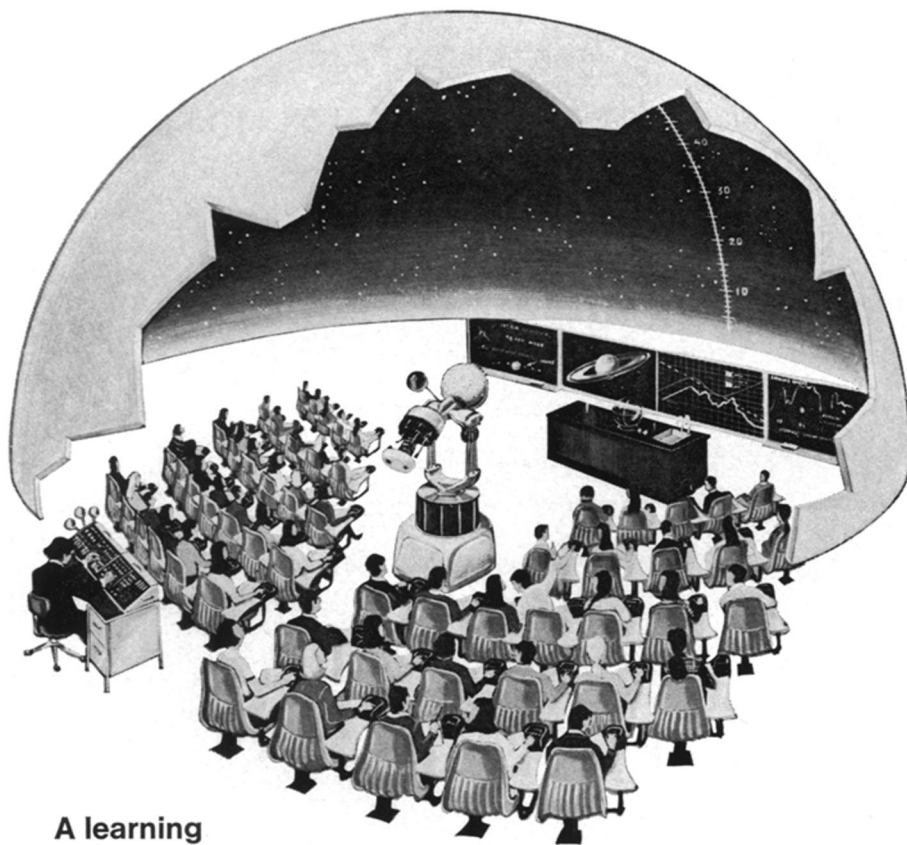


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*To paraphrase Marshall McLuhan

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Director: EARL J. SCHERAGO
Address all advertising to Sherago Associates, 11 West 42nd St., New York, N.Y. 10036.

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to the editor

Lunar science

Re: Your article on the Apollo 11 Lunar Science Conference (SN: 1/10, p. 33). I think you did an outstanding job in summing up the highlights of the meeting.

*Dr. Edward Anders
Enrico Fermi Institute
University of Chicago
Chicago, Ill.*

An observation

I have just read the article "Irrigation and Climate" by Kendrick Frazier (SN: 12/27, p. 599). I find a great correlation between the situation taking place in the Great Plains and here in the Columbia Basin in relation to the effect of irrigation on the climate.

The Columbia Basin Irrigation Project was begun around 30 years ago with the goal of irrigating one million acres of semiarid lands in the sagebrush-covered area of eastern Washington in the Big Bend country of the Columbia River. This was accomplished for the most part through the construction of dams (notably the Grand Coulee Dam) and the resultant filling of great reservoirs. About half of the one million acres is now under irrigation.

The climate of this area used to be fairly dry; usually less than 15 inches a year. It has increased dramatically since then. We are plagued with morning fogs several weeks of the year in the fall and winter. While snowfall has not increased much, winter rains have. Spring rains are also heavier than they were in 1946 when irrigation first began. This is borne out by the testimony of pioneers in the area who have lived to see this desert blossom. Sometimes our weather is compared to the infamous climate of Seattle, and with due cause!

All this evidence (qualitative, at best) seems to point out that the Columbia Basin has undergone a climatic change of some extent over the last few years.

There is an area of great size in the Australian outback that has recently been changed from dry badlands to fertile grazing lands. It is an area that would be interesting to study in order to ascertain any climatic changes resulting from it.

*Jeffrey F. Gilman
Moses Lake, Wash.*

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Washington, D. C. 20036*