

# to the editor

## What, indeed?

What the hell has that article ("An Inevitable American Tragedy," SN: 5/9, p. 451) got to do with science news?? Get off your political soap box or expect cancellation the next time.

*R. D. Liccini  
Los Angeles, Calif.*

## Thermionic topping

I found the article on thermionics (SN: 5/16, p. 490) most interesting, particularly as it relates to coal-powered topping cycles for central station power. As you know, we are concentrating our current work in nuclear thermionics for space applications.

Keep up your good job of reporting.

*J. E. Gingrich, Manager  
Application Engineering and  
Documentation  
General Electric Company  
Vallecitos Nuclear Center  
Pleasanton, Calif.*

## Biopolitics

With regard to your comment, "Well-dressed and an ex-Marine, Morgan is obviously not a radical" (SN: 5/16, p. 475). If you have read Mao Tse-tung you will recall that he admonishes his followers to look and act like the "Establishment." This is a human application of the biological principle of protective coloration.

*Mary W. T. Arny  
Dept. of Biology  
Montclair State College  
New Jersey*

## The league's position

In your article on student activism (SN: 5/16, p. 475), you state that the League of Women Voters "passed an unprecedented resolution against the United States involvement in Cambodia."

Actually, during the League's national convention in Washington, May 4-8,

delegates voted not to consider a resolution concerning the Cambodian war. What did happen, however, was that the delegates did instruct the national Board to send a letter to President Nixon expressing their concern over the national turmoil stemming from the Cambodian situation.

The letter read:

"Dear Mr. President:

"Delegates to the national convention of the League of Women Voters of the United States, meeting in Washington, D.C., are deeply concerned about the national crisis resulting from the extension of the war into Cambodia.

"As we meet to pursue our traditional business of building informed citizen support for effective democratic self-government, we feel it is imperative that this turmoil in our country spread no further.

"It is our conviction that the Government of the United States must respond to the concerns of its citizens. We urge you to listen with close attention to the voices of all the people—the young and the mature, the poor and the affluent, the farm, the suburb, the city and the campus. The tragedy of a divided nation must be averted. Our free society and the democratic process must be preserved. Delegates at this convention ask you to exert your leadership to this end."

While the letter did not take a position on the war, it did reflect the League's traditional concern for maintaining and strengthening our political processes. This concern has been the basis of our nonpartisanship and will continue to be so.

*Mrs. Bruce B. Benson, President  
League of Women Voters  
Washington, D.C.*

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# films OF THE WEEK

**CHANGING GHANA.** 16mm, color, sound, 19 min. Presents this African nation, independent since 1957, as a mixture of old traditions and modern developments. The many small villages where most of the population lives, the mud-wall houses, the open markets and the traditional crafts of the people are contrasted with the rain forest region's cocoa and lumber industries, the mining and processing of Ghana's mineral riches, and other more recent developments in the industrialization of the country. Audience: high school, college, adult. Purchase \$250 or rental \$12.50 from International Film Bureau, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60604.

**MAGNETISM AT WORK.** 16mm, color, sound, 11½ min. Focuses on the uses of magnets in today's technology. Shows magnetic applications in sound and video recording, computers, agriculture and medicine. Begins with history of magnetism, from discovery through compasses, magnetic fields and electromagnetics. Gives explanation of what magnetism is, covering diamagnetism, paramagnetism, ferromagnetism and domains. Ends with more applications, including demonstration of one of magnetism's role in modern medicine. Audience: general. Free loan from General Electric Educational Films, 60 Washington Ave., Schenectady, N.Y. 12305.

**NUCLEAR FINGERPRINTING IN ANCIENT POTTERY.** 16mm, color, sound, 20 min. The nuclear "fingerprint" of ancient pottery is an extremely precise chemical analysis of the material in that item by nuclear techniques. The fingerprint is obtained by first removing a small sample of the pottery item, then irradiating the sample inside a nuclear reactor. The radioactive isotopes produced emit different amounts and intensities of radiation, which are analyzed by a germanium detector and other equipment. Data are then converted into an extremely precise chemical analysis. This technique gives archaeologists a means of knowing where pottery came from, which is independent of stylistic criteria and does not depend upon inferences as to where particular styles arose. Audience: general. Free loan from Audio-Visual Branch, Department of Public Information, U.S. Atomic Energy Commission, Washington, D.C. 20545.

**VECTORS AND MATRICES.** 16mm, b&w, sound, four films. Vectors (and matrices) provide a notation which enables us to manipulate a whole collection of numbers as if it were a single mathematical entity and to express complicated relationships in a simple way. They afford a good example of the construction of a new kind of algebra. These films illustrate their applications to different branches of mathematics. Title are: Different Dimensions, Various Vectors, Meet The Matrix, and More About The Matrix. Audience: high school and up.

*Listing is for readers' information of new 16mm and 8mm films on science, engineering, medicine and agriculture for professional, student and general audiences. For further information on purchase, rental or free loan, write to distributor.*

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