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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.

to the editor

Second century coin

Your very informative report on "RA II" (SN: 7/25, p. 61) apparently contains a confusing error—possibly due to faulty translating or typing. You state that the coin, found in Martinique, was identified by the Institute of Numismatics in Paris "as a genuine Ptolemaic coin of the Second or Third Egyptian Dynasty."

However, the Ptolemies—descendants of one of Alexander the Great's generals—ruled Egypt from 305 to 30 B.C., ending with Cleopatra. The Second and Third Egyptian Dynasties, however, ruled more than 2,000 years earlier: Zoser, the founder of the Third Dynasty, 2700-2650 B.C. is mainly known as the builder of the step pyramid at Sakkara.

A coin from the days of the Ptolemies can therefore not be related to the Second or Third Dynasty, or vice versa. Could the Institute of Numismatics have referred to the 2nd or 3rd centuries (B.C.)—the time of Ptolemaic rule? I hope you will be able to clarify this highly significant point.

Henry C. Sutton
Washington, D.C.

I refer to the article "Second time success" (SN: 7/25, p. 61).

As a numismatist and as a student of history, I was surprised at the reference to a Ptolemaic coin of the Second or Third Egyptian Dynasty. It seems to me that the Second or Third Egyptian Dynasty would be about 4,000 years ago in the early beginnings of recorded history. Ptolemy seized the throne of Egypt after the death of Alexander approximately 323 B.C. Ptolemy created a Greek Dynasty on the Egyptian throne which ended with Cleopatra VII (of Caesar and Mark Antony fame).

What is overlooked is the propensity of people to carry a pocket piece as a good luck token especially if it is unusual. Genuine Ptolemaic coins are not rare and exist literally in tens of thousands of pieces. Just as ancient Judean coinage has turned up in Central Europe where it may have been carried by Roman Legionnaires as souvenirs, a pirate between the 15th and 18th centuries could have dropped his Ptolemaic coin good luck piece on the beach in Martinique.

Harold J. Nussbaum
Washington, D.C.

(Our readers are right: Heyerdahl was referring to the 2nd or 3rd centuries B.C., not the Second or Third Dynasties. Ed.)

Laetrile and cancer

In response to the article "The apricot pit bit" (SN: 7/25, p. 55), I may say that I felt that it was very well written and aptly epitomized by the keynote heading, "Laetrile deserves a try," which neatly sums up my main viewpoint in four words.

Many press articles on Laetrile are inclined to a liberal amount of the snide so well described 500 years ago in the *Knights Tale*, "The Smyler with the Knyf under the Cloke," (Chaucer) or 400 years ago in *Macbeth* by "Daggers in men's smiles." I am happy to report to you that I find none of this in the *SCIENCE NEWS* article. I will also admit that I have boasted rather widely that should *SCIENCE NEWS* ever write on the current Laetrile situation, the Chaucer quotation would not pertain.

Apropos "the relatively few but highly placed opponents of the IND 6734 study of Laetrile-amygdalin, who" (See p. 214)

SCIENCE NEWS

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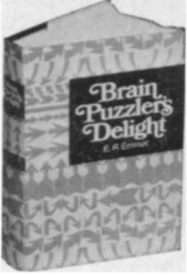
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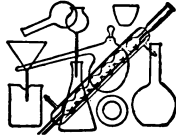
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... letters

have never personally worked with it," (p. 3, my letter to Rep. Fountain of July 21, 1970), the enclosed "Grim Picture" sets forth opinions on general cancer progress by medical doctors selected by the American Cancer Society and the National Cancer Institute, when such doctors were talking among themselves and not to some appropriations committee, and these opinions indicate that the human cancer problem is a very long way from being solved; so far off, indeed, that the dog-in-the-manger attitude of IND 6734-opponents rings with false bark; they have no scientific case, just bark without teeth. This is no time to be proscribing limits of cancer endeavors, particularly with nontoxic drugs.

And when such opponents say and write that "amygdalin has definitely been proven to be worthless in the cure of any form of cancer," they should be asked to come forward with documentary proof to such effect, if they can.

Of "Officials of the National Cancer Institute, somewhat embarrassed by a colleague who they declare has no special scientific competence in toxicology or pharmacology," one can similarly ask them to come forward with documentary proof to said claim, if they can. Inferring from your article that this colleague is indeed the undersigned, I would make the claim that I have written one of the most widely read classics in these fields (Lineweaver and Burk, J.A.C.S., 56, 658-66, 1934), a paper that, to my knowledge has been more frequently cited than any other single paper. In brief, such officials are talking through their hats, to call the proverbial spade. When such an official writes that "The experimental results reported by Dr. Burk, while of interest, have no implications in respect to the advantages or desirability of the clinical use of Laetrile," he is deliberately ignoring the advantage of nontoxicity, such as are scarcely possessed by any of the clinical cancer drugs now in use. The only effective way to pronounce on the efficacy or nonefficacy of Laetrile is to let the matter come under IND 6734 study, without dog-in-the-manger attitude or pronouncement, and in accordance with the law.

So, I still stand with your epitome, "Laetrile deserves a try."

Dean Burk
Head, Cytochemistry Section
National Cancer Institute
Bethesda, Md.

Regarding the article "The apricot pit bit" (SN: 7/25, p. 55), describing and reporting on Laetrile, I think you have capsulized in this article an enormous volume of written material that

has crossed my desk in the last few years regarding this material, and have captured it very well.

Dr. Nathaniel I. Berlin
Clinical Director
National Cancer Institute
Bethesda, Md.

Prednisone report

Your report (SN: 7/11, p. 37) on the paper I delivered to the Drug Metabolism in Man Conference at the New York Academy of Sciences Conference is well written and gives a balanced view of the data we obtained showing an association between adverse effects to prednisone and low serum albumin values.

Dr. George P. Lewis
Chief, Clinical Pharmacology
Veterans Administration Hospital
Boston, Mass.

Space biology

I have read the article on "Reviewing space priorities" (SN: 8/1, p. 93) and frankly, I am very pleased at the tone and content of it. I think the article is excellent.

I do believe, however, that several good biological experiments have been suggested but they are not yet ready to fly. That is the only statement within the article with which I could disagree.

Dr. J. W. Humphreys Jr.
Director, Space Medicine
Manned Space Flight
National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Washington, D.C.

Science betrayal

I read with disgust your "Letter from London" by Larry Miller (SN: 8/1, p. 102). The question should not be "How should the British Government intervene?" but instead "Should it intervene at all?"

If an industry "lags behind," it should not be rewarded with grants nor have research scientists working at taxpayers' expense to bring the "wayward ones" up to par. In a free economy, the laggards would be surpassed and forced out of business by enterprising businessmen who offer the public a better product and who hire scientists to improve that product.

But then, Britain has not a free economy. Neither has the United States. And SCIENCE NEWS is doing nothing to foster freedom and everything to encourage Government takeover of science and economics. Every article smacks of anti-capitalist bias. You are betraying science and free scientific inquiry.

Elizabeth Beverly
Science Teacher
Denver, Colo.