

films OF THE WEEK

MUSEUM OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM. 16mm, color, sound, 23 min. Focuses on the analysis of the rocks and soil from the moon and what this information can tell us of the history of our solar system. Illustrates how basic facts about lunar materials were gathered—their ages, minerals, elemental abundances, and history of bombardment by solar and galactic particles. Segments in the film include a slow “zoom-in” on a microcrater in a lunar grain magnified thousands of times, tiny nuclear tracks in moon crystals, and a simulation of how lunar rocks were formed from hot liquids. Audience: secondary, college, adult. Purchase \$250 or rental \$25 from Stuart Finley Inc., Dept. SN, 3428 Mansfield Rd., Falls Church, Va. 22041.

SPIRES/BALLOTS REPORT. 16mm, color, sound, 15 min. SPIRES (Stanford Public Information Retrieval System) and BALLOTS (Bibliographic Automation of Large Library Operations using Time Sharing) are research projects designed to computerize library systems, and which show promise of revolutionizing library research. Film describes these projects, and elivens its description of the research work with amusingly satiric glimpses of man's previous efforts to solve the problem of information storage. Audience: librarians, general. Purchase \$180 or rental \$12.50 from Extension Media Center, Dept. SN, University Extension, University of California, Berkeley, Calif. 94720.

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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to the editor

Emotions and feminism

Like everybody else when writing about the feminist movement Dr. Laurel Walum and Theo Wells in “Feminism moves on” (SN: 9/5, p. 199) jump to the unproven conclusions that the new concepts of womanhood are good, that they will benefit all women and that female submission to male dominance is cultural. Feminists make these statements and everybody says, “Amen” as if they were the Gospel Truth.

The truth of the matter is that there have never been any scientific studies to determine what makes women act the way they do and to determine the effect which feminism will have upon what makes women act the way they do if feminists are successful in imposing their ideas upon all women. . . . Many women who would rather stay home are too timid even to write their Congressman and say that they are against Women's Lib. We seem to have a silent majority for homemaking and vocal minority for feminism.

So it seems to me that before we make any more statements about women's actions and reactions being cultural, we should have some studies upon what most women want, whether the differences between homebodies and career women, are cultural or genetic and, if the differences are genetic, why some women have one type of inherent behavior and why some women have another.

And, while we are waiting for such studies and their results, I am fighting tooth and nail for the women I have talked with who want to stay home and be homebodies, but are not aggressive enough to fight for themselves.

(Mrs.) *Juanita Matassa*
Santa Ana, Calif.

I subscribe to SCIENCE NEWS for science's sake. Please fire the space waster who crowded in “Feminism moves on.” They can move on and on in the cheap tabloids and the hungry press.

Warner Walker
Exeter, Calif.

Molecules in space

In your article “Toward life between the stars” (SN: 10/10, p. 299), you attribute to Dr. Barry E. Turner of the National Radio Astronomy Observatory several statements which I feel sure he did not make. In particular the statement that “benzene is a main component of a number of amino acids, especially pyridine, one of the main

constituents of DNA.” Pyridine is not an amino acid, pyridine is not a constituent of DNA, amino acids are not constituents of DNA, and benzene is not a component of pyridine, although it may be used in the synthesis of pyridine.

R. H. Mephram, Ph.D.
Salmon Arm
British Columbia
Canada

(Dr. Mephram is correct. The National Science Foundation acknowledges its press statement was inaccurate in calling pyridine an amino acid. We failed to catch that error and then compounded it by not correcting further erroneous comments of another source our reporter talked to in seeking elaboration. Ed.)

Caution on pathogens

I was interesting in reading Dr. E. F. Knipling's letter on insect pathogens (SN: 12/5, p. 426). Dr. Knipling gave a note of caution about the role that insect pathogens may eventually play in the control of insects. I wish Dr. Knipling would have elaborated his views.

In all discussions I have seen or heard on insect pathogens it has rarely been seriously suggested that insect pathogens may be or could become pathogenic to plants, animals and humans. It is obvious that no pathogen should ever be deliberately released into our environment without being completely certain of its safety to other species. New therapeutic drugs and new insecticides, before approval for use, must undergo a long and complex safety study requiring several years to complete. Insect pathogens, particularly viruses, must be at least as carefully assessed for their safety as any new drug or insecticide.

A number of viruses are known to undergo mutations and some are known to produce neoplasias in animals. We know viruses that produce the same infection in animals and in man. I don't believe we know with certainty that insect viruses as a class are harmless to man.

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