to the editor

Scapegoat?

Re: "A time of torment for science" (SN: 1/2/71, p. 5), John Kennedy made it this country's national goal to "chase off to the moon;" Presidents Kennedy, Johnson and Nixon have chosen to "promote an unpopular war;" and Silent Q. Majority, who cannot be bothered with returnable bottles, has forced development of "a gadget-ridden economy."

When will science cease to be the scapegoat and the American public accept the fact that their misplaced priorities are the cause of most of our problems?

R. J. Murphy
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SC of C not SRC

In an otherwise perceptive article on "Canadian big science" (SN: 12/19/70, p. 462) reference was made to a "Science Research Council." The body in question is in fact the Science Council of Canada, which was created in May 1966. In addition to its opinions on Canadian participation in the CARSO Project and the NAL at Batavia (both of which opinions were delivered to the Canadian Federal Government in September 1969), the Science Council has published 11 other formal reports and a larger number of background studies touching on many areas of Canadian science.

J. Mullin
Secretary, Science
Council of Canada
Ottawa, Canada

One family's contribution

A mere housewife, who enjoys your publication very much, I was quite interested in the statement in "A solution becomes a problem" (SN: 12/26/70, p. 475), that "a return to soap, with possible additives to increase efficiency, is difficult because there may not be enough tallow to make it."

Possibly my methods are not particularly "scientific," any more than my conclusions and "assumptions." However, with the tallow sold over the counter as "meat"—and on a very-low meat budget—I've been able to make twice as much soap as my family of five could use over the years. The end product is used to clean floors, dishes, clothes, skin, hair, etc. No one has developed dermitis. We have no problems with cholesterol.

Admittedly, I am doing nothing for the gross national product. This little home industry, observed because of Yankee background as much as environmental literacy, alas cannot be value-taxed. Yet I think there might be a thought or two here for my betters trying to put out a very large fire with water pistols (The same who ignored the smoke all this while, in heedless pursuit of technology and the buck.)

Fifty, female and forgettable
Windsor, Conn.

Feminism and science

I cannot resist the opportunity to comment (somewhat tardily) on the comments (SN: 1/9/71, p. 20) on your article "Feminism moves on" (SN: 9/5/70, p. 199).

A basic point in reply to Mrs. Matassa: No feminist to my knowledge has ever considered making it as difficult for a woman to be a "homemaker" as our present society makes it difficult for her to take up an alternative occupation. Mrs. Matassa need not fear that anyone will force her to go out to work; if we ask anything from her at all, it is the recognition that women have the right to do so, if they wish to. Secondly, I do not see why "scientific studies" are required; if they proved that a majority of women favored a continuation of the present female role, what could that prove, and what would that justify? Certainly not restraints on female activity, any more than the lack of enthusiasm shared by many for our constitutional right to vote would justify restricting that right; one of the most important aspects of a democratic society is the recognition of the rights of a minority.

As for Walker, is he objecting to any article in SCIENCE NEWS other than the "purely scientific" ones, or to the article on feminism in particular? From his tone, I would suspect the latter. The problem is, of course, where should one draw the line? Is an article on feminism any more inherently "unscientific" than one on the administration of antipollution regulations or one on recent hell-raising at a scientific convention? (This remains true whether one sees feminism as an important social problem or as a case study in abnormal psychology.)

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films OF THE WEEK

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