

to the editor

Meteorological warfare

To quote Mr. Frazier, "It would be tragic if . . . social benefits were tarnished by the irresponsible actions of the military in making use of weather modification as an instrument of warfare" (SN: 7/15/72, p. 35). It seems that Mr. Frazier does not consider warfare as a social benefit per se. Certainly those who wage war expect to achieve social benefit for their people.

L. Herman Bell Sr.
Greensboro, N.C.

It would seem to me that some extra rain would be less damaging to the environment than a sniper with a machete. If the warmongers have generated no more rain than Joanne Simpson, your "specter" is 99 percent vapor. A treaty is a fine sounding board and useful communication, but please don't encourage the doctrine that it is a guarantee. History has proved, "The price of freedom is eternal vigilance," which part of your editorial represents. But let's not be hysterical or jump on bandwagons or whipping boys. Be objective—let's condemn all warfare and get on with it.

Ben L. Skinner
Allied Precision Products, Inc.
Dunedin, Fla.

I was surprised and antagonized to find out about our country's misuse of weather alteration in Southeast Asia.

William Britton
Cincinnati, Ohio

I admire your comment on "The specter of meteorological warfare."

Carol J. Hanrahan
N. Olmsted, Ohio

Saving open land

I'm over here in England, and I just finished reading your article about "The energy industry eyes the Northern Great Plains" (SN: 3/4/72, p. 156) and it was pretty upsetting. You may be able to say today that there's plenty of room to expand or that technology will take care of all the problems, but in Europe you can see today the results of that philosophy. The English countryside is a totally artificial result of 250 years of exploitation. There is no part of the countryside (except possibly the highlands of Scotland and Wales) which is in its wild state. Almost all of the available space is used for artificial purposes: if it is not covered by a wheat field or a building or a road, then it is probably a cow or sheep pasture. There is no place one may go which allows one to be unaware of the presence or, more correctly, dominance of man. Even miles out at sea the most dominant features of the coastline are smokestacks or bridges.

It is very depressing. When one considers what a wonderful release it is to be able to wander for miles through the forests of New England or the mountains of the West, and compares that to the

possibility of a totally subverted countryside such as the Europeans have accustomized themselves to, and which America's engineers and industrialists and planners envision, it is quite appalling. Perhaps the march of "progress" is inevitable, but it appears we are reaching a crisis point. We have reached the point where we must decide whether we are going to continue to perpetuate the primitive, man-against-nature, waste-for-its-own-sake mentality (which certainly got us out of the caves and into air conditioning, to be sure) until it dictates our entire surroundings, or whether we will begin to take a saner approach, which may leave for ourselves (for several generations to come) something of the physical heritage which is and always will be the most important factor in our existence. Perhaps saving open land will not advance our quantitative knowledge, but it will give man, someday, a chance to rediscover what it was he ever invented technology for.

John Mirk
Rice University
Houston, Texas
(mailed from London)

Cuba trip

I want to compliment you on the well-written summary of our recent trip to Cuba (SN: 7/15/72, p. 39). It was a good job of factual reporting and interesting writing, and one of the few articles on that sensitive trip that did not send me straight through the overhead. Keep up the good work.

Harris B. Stewart Jr.
Director, National Oceanic and
Atmospheric Administration
Atlantic Oceanographic and
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Miami, Fla.

News judgment

With every new issue of SCIENCE NEWS, I get the increasing suspicion that I am being cheated.

The issue of July 22 is a perfect example of this growing trend to short-change your subscribers. Two entire pages are devoted to birth control in China and the gentle art of skyjacking. It is nice to know that the Chinese are making an effort to keep their women from pregnancy, and we are all sympathetic to-

ward aircraft pilots and their troubles, but there is little here that cannot be obtained in more detail in other sources. Even less comes under the heading of science news. What in the world is scientifically newsworthy in Chinese con-
doms or skyriding lunatics?

Jesse Dilson
New York, N.Y.

(No publication can ensure that every article it chooses to print will interest every reader. However, we do believe that the articles on the psychological aspects of the skyjacking problem and on the successful medical and behavioral techniques being used to control population in China are of interest and importance to a majority of scientific inclined readers concerned about social and world affairs.—Ed.)

Skypirates

Concerning your article, "Jumping jumping jacks before they jump" (SN: 7/22/72, p. 52), I am pleased to know that so much is finally being done to thwart the attempts of would-be skyjackers. I'm especially impressed with the news media's cooperation in playing down the Robin Hood histrionics of such overt crime. If a skypirate contender senses the glamor of his impending act dissolve, he may still assail society on other fronts, but it's not likely to be on the wing.

Fred R. Monaco
Dillon, Colo.

Added support

I would like to add my support to Joanne Ashley's suggestion that you start a tabularized science legislation column. Something must be done to inform the public of pending science legislation in order to halt the antisience/antitechnology feeling in America today. A complete listing of pending science legislation would enable more of our scientifically literate citizens to express their views to their elected representatives in Congress. I hope you give Ms. Ashley's suggestion the consideration and action it deserves.

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