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Cover: Sunlight glistens off oil on waters of Santa Barbara Channel after the oil and gas ruptures of 1969. Some progress has been made in the technology to cleanup oil spills, but prevention is still the key. See p. 250. Meantime, a House committee report assails lack of enforcement of oil spill regulations. See p. 252. (Photo: EPA)

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# to the editor

## McGovern on aerospace

I find Sen. McGovern's stance on aerospace to be weak and without foresight. Our state of technology in the 21st century will be sharply determined by the decisions and strides we make *now* between 1972 and 1976. We can't afford to scuttle the shuttle; and we certainly can't afford to deflate and de-escalate an already wasting, undernourished aerospace industry. This industry is pitifully losing its job appeal to young science graduates due to already deficient funding.

Remember, the reason aerospace costs were so high in the early days of the program was that we had to start everything from scratch. Only now are we beginning to cut development, deployment and launch costs in our projects, thanks to the hard work of the past 15 years. We now have the machinery, both human (organizational) and technological to participate in man's greatest adventure.

James T. Kessler  
Hollywood, Calif.

## Covering physics

Kudos to your reporter at the 16th International Conference on High Energy Physics at the University of Chicago and the National Accelerator Laboratory (SN: 9/23/72, p. 200). The background information given with each item proved very helpful in understanding the importance of the work. Please continue this practice.

Pepi Riveros  
Berkeley, Calif.

## Not the last from Cannikin

If the increase in magnetic field strength at Cannikin results from subterranean stresses that have not been relieved (SN: 9/9/72, p. 164), and if the earthquake activity stimulated by the test was actually less than that produced by tests at Nevada (ibid., p. 170), does this not suggest that the non-seismic region in Nevada is capable of "leaking off" stresses, while the Ring of Fire region tends to store them for cataclysmic discharge? And is it not possible that we have not heard the last of Cannikin?

Frank A. Saunders  
Department of Visual Sciences  
University of the Pacific  
San Francisco, Calif.

## Rights to assess

I'm afraid we'll have to take away Ralph M. Dreger's right to assess the value of the MMPI (SN: 7/16/72, p. 189). If he could only see a personality assessor as a human being rather than a Constitution-eating ogre, perhaps he could earn the privilege of assigning the rights of man to man.

Jerry Gill  
Ft. Walton Beach, Fla.

## The wild buffalo

It is incredible that the Western stockmen have found yet another way in which to abuse the privilege of using public preserves.

They have already quite successfully fenced off the people's land, decimated the people's wildlife (some to the point of extinction), sprayed with illegal herbicide the people's plant life and generally have taken over and made the people's land their own for their own profit.

And now they want to eliminate the buffalo which they say is a source of brucellosis (SN: 9/2/72, p. 158), even though there is a vaccine to prevent this disease in cattle.

Cattle can be replaced; our wild creatures and places cannot.

Sally M. Snidow  
Cape May, N.J.

## An unreachable beyond?

First we read of black holes, alien objects unobservable and unknowable, save only mathematically.

Then we read thoughts of black galaxies, imagined complete with stars and planets, but with collective gravitational fields too extensive and pervasive for light to quite escape.

And now I wonder: Might there be any thought that the entire observable universe might be a collective "black cosmos," with an unreachable "beyond" beyond?

Michael N. Tierstein  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

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