

science news[®] to the editor

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Cover: The California Supreme Court recently ruled that land developers are required to file environmental impact statements on any proposed project that requires a permit from a local government agency. Environmentalists are hailing it and other court decisions regulating land use at the local level. See p. 363. (Photo: EPA-Documerica/Belinda Rain)

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Energy to matter

In your article "Probing the proton at high energy" (SN: 10/28/72, p. 285), you mentioned how, in the collision of high-energy protons, many secondary particles are produced, presumably from within the protons themselves. Can you explain to me why it may not be an energy-to-matter conversion?

Robert Fritter
Elmhurst, Ill.

(Matter-assisted energy-to-matter transformation is surely what it is. As the article points out, the energies involved in the collision are so much greater than the proton rest mass that it is difficult to see what the results indicate about structure within the proton. As the article points out, when an electron is knocked out of an atom, we can reasonably assume that the electron existed as an electron within the atom. We cannot say any such thing about the particles that come out of these ultra-high-energy proton-proton collisions.—Ed.)

Methadone and body rhythms

I would like to correct several mistaken impressions set forth in your article reporting on our study in NATURE, "Methadone induced mortality as a function of the circadian cycle" (SN: 10/28/72, p. 282). First, our work at that time utilized only animal subjects; no heroin addicts were involved. Results appeared to implicate the circadian rhythm as one of many factors in the effectiveness and lethality of methadone. Based upon this study, it was our intention in the discussion only to point out the potential relevance of this factor to human methadone administration and encourage further basic research in this area, not to make specific recommendations regarding its medical use in humans at this time.

Robert H. Lenox, M.D.
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Why no flood alarms?

We read with interest and anguish your article "When floods strike" (SN: 8/19/72, p. 118). J-TEC is the manufacturer of the referenced automatic flood warning system.

Frankly, our manufacture of the flood warning systems is very nearly a public service. We believe in the concept and have maintained a price low enough (\$2,950 complete) that we anticipated most communities could afford it.

We blanketed with our literature state and Federal agencies, Civil Defense centers and even the Mayors, Representatives, and Senators of recently stricken communities.

Results? Absolutely nothing! Floods are one of the grandest political and economic footballs in existence. Floods are an excuse to build dams. Floods bring profits to certain trades and occupations.

The typical community will spend a quarter of a million dollars on mean-

ingless "studies" and heavy machinery to move dirt to "prepare" for a flood without so much as batting an eye. They will permit zoning so that homes are built in flood paths. They will literally invite flooding by paving over huge areas without a thought to the problem of run-off created.

The year 1972 with its disastrous toll of life and property to floods has generated a great hue and cry, mostly political and name-calling in character. Millions of dollars of new investigations have been authorized. But how many communities have spent one thin dime in simple, proven alarm systems? Systems which cost less than the furniture in one flooded home and could save lives? Systems so simple to install that any electrician can make the few connections necessary? None!

How much has Congress appropriated for installations in the field this year? None!

L. E. (Gene) Stone
J-TEC Associates, Inc.
Cedar Rapids, Iowa

Lost in the labyrinth

I found Robert J. Trotter's article, "Let it all out: Yes or No?" (SN: 10/15/72, p. 254) very amusing. I could envision Janov's primal scream to a Tarzan setting in an African jungle with Janov at the head of the pack, his patients in line behind him, swinging from tree to tree emitting ferocious primal screams. And yet this is far from amusing, as attested to in the article, with the California Superior Court's decision in awarding \$170,000 to a patient who had been tortured by her psychiatrist in his effort to cure her by the fantastic theory of "Rage Reduction." It seems to me that many in the field of psychology get lost in the labyrinth of their own mental convolutions, inflicting unnecessary pain and mental anguish upon their hapless patients by such simplistic theories which liken the human mind to a steam boiler in which the steam must either be vented or the boiler blows up.

Louis Fishman
Chicago, Ill.

Power plant cooling

Reading that the Atomic Energy Commission has ordered Con Edison to change the cooling system of its nuclear power plant at Indian Point (SN: 10/7/72, p. 231), I would like to ask why that plant is not provided with a heat exchanger like the one used at the boiling water reactor at Argonne National Laboratory, Lemont, Ill. This way the excess heat, instead of being pumped into the Hudson River, could be used to drive a turbine, thus increasing the power output of the plant. Furthermore, heat is a form of energy that can be converted into useful work. I don't see why it is being wasted.

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