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Cover: How crystals form on the moon tells scientists something about the early conditions of the lunar environment. These micron-sized crystals (one-millionth of a meter) photographed with a scanning electron microscope were discussed at the Fourth Lunar Science Conference in Houston last week. See p. 164. (Photos: McKay and Clanton/NASA)

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march 17, 1973

to the editor

Scientists and Vietnam

I don't believe the pages of SCIENCE NEWS are a proper place for squabbles. However Paul Gwin's letter (SN: 2/17/73, p. 99) requires rebuttal if only on the basis of lousy logic.

He states that scientists know next to nothing about the Vietnam war. His statement is incomplete, viz . . .

Plumbers know next to nothing about . . .

Waitresses know next to nothing about . . .

Doctors and lawyers know next to nothing about . . .

Politicians and Congressmen know next . . . and so ad infinitum. . . .

He should have said clearly what he thinks. He should have said that we, the people, have no right to express an opinion on the war except as it coincides with the plans of the Administration.

Harold C. Bordewich
Scarsdale, N.Y.

Humanity suffers when supposedly educated persons (e.g. scientists) fail to oppose war. If Gwin and the scientists he knows "know next to nothing" about Vietnam—this is a crime!

Fuehrers rise when citizens abdicate their responsibility to speak out against wrongs!

Wendell Funk
Grand Lake, Colo.

Overcrowding and affluence

Re: "Not with a bang . . ." (SN: 2/3/73, p. 73). Very impressive experiment—as far as it goes. Overcrowding plus affluence and Utopia perverted the nature of the mice. In our human world, and especially in the United States, perverted behavior seems to increase in spite of (or perhaps because of) affluence and some governmental paternalism. However, in India, with overpopulation in combination with unfavorable conditions, the people exhibit less aggression, etc. And their population shows little sign of declining due to nonsurvival of the newborn.

Such isolated experiments, while very useful, may lead us unnecessarily to a doomsday outlook. I wonder what some contrasting experiments would show. Such as:

1. Mice allowed to overpopulate, in combination with weather, disease, limited

food and the need to fight for it, and other "adverse" conditions.

2. Mice populate freely, but have plenty of space, everything provided for them, and other Utopian conditions, but with little challenge and adversity.

Rex C. Campbell, P.E.
Roanoke, Va.

Space for primates

In reply to the letter by Channing S. Williams (SN: 2/17/73, p. 99), I would like to point out that while primates are sociable creatures, they also like space to wander around in. Jane Goodall estimates that the population density of chimpanzees of the Gombe Stream Reserve is 2.6 animals per square mile, but only part of the area is used. Of course, people are not chimpanzees. On the other hand a lot has been written about the social effects of living in large, crowded cities.

C. T. Martoccia
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East Carolina University
Greenville, N.C.

Anti-cholesterol vitamin C

Your article "Vitamin C and heart attacks" (SN: 2/17/73, p. 106), was good news indeed, but old news to readers of the PENN STATE ALUMNI NEWS. That newsletter, in some detail, reported in November of 1971 that Ralph Mumma, a Penn State scientist had told the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology in the spring of 1971 that he had identified the chemical mechanism (ascorbic acid sulfation) that flushes cholesterol from the arteries and organs of the body.

Mumma, like Ginter, was not willing to certify ascorbic acid as an anti-cholesterol agent for humans in spite of the rather convincing experiments with rats.

Alex Henderson
Professor of Biology
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Millersville, Pa.

See page 168 for a special presentation of reader reaction and follow-up information concerning our recent article on endangered wolves.

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