

# science news<sup>®</sup> to the editor

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Incorporating Science News Letter

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**COVER:** Opponents of psychosurgery have found a variety of allies in Congress and the legal profession. Bills regulating psychosurgery and human experimentation are now pending. See p. 310. (Drawing: John Lane, *Enterprise Science News*)

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## On homosexuality

Concerning William Kelley's charge of bias in classifying homosexuality (SN: 4/14/73, p. 235), several observations:

(1) From an evolutionary point of view, sexuality seems to have developed as a successful means of propagating the species. Obviously a heterosexual "instinct" would be passed on. A purely homosexual "instinct," on the other hand, could not develop, since there would be little or no progeny. . . .

(2) While cases of homosexuality are occasionally observed in other animals, it would seem that this behavior is mostly limited to animals that have been deprived of a sexual outlet over a period of time or else have had extended abnormal pre-pubertal experiences. . . .

(3) All this overlooks the fact, however, that sexuality in man seems to be vastly more subtle than simple animal sexuality. To fail to recognize the force of language and social intercourse and the power toward radical behavioral change they imply is to fail to see how man differs from the animals. Specifically, it would seem that individual moral standards are created by personal intercommunication and interaction with society and vary as that intercommunication and interaction vary. These intensely personal forces of interaction can easily override or modify any simple animal "instincts" a man may have had. Thus there is here no question, really, of normalcy or abnormality, pathology or health. It is rather a matter of deeply personal interactions with society modifying a simple animal "instinct."

*John F. Leahy  
Gonzales, Calif.*

The letter of William B. Kelley is so "right on" that if it were a chess move it would be followed by (!).

"The concept of sin no longer being sufficiently respectable, prejudice against homosexuality has had to resort to pseudoscience for reinforcement."

Those of us who have been looking for a rational treatment of prostitution, pornography and use of marijuana might simply substitute any of these words for "homosexuality" in the aforementioned quotation. After various and sundry Presi-

dential and other study commissions demonstrating the lack of reason for prohibitory regulations, the archaic laws remain. We only need to think of current rationale for maintenance of these statutes to discover that they are thin films for the underlying feeling that they are "sinful."

*Lewis Schwartzman  
Flushing, N.Y.*

## El Niño and the soybeans

Your article "A sea-level warning of El Niño's warming" (SN: 4/7/73, p. 222) did a very nice job in summarizing my paper and in communicating it to the general public. You may be surprised that I have already received a few communications regarding this article. Among them was one from the president of a foodstuff company who was wondering about the connection between El Niño's warming, the low anchovy catch, and the rise in soybean prices. They are indeed all connected.

*Klaus Wyrtki  
Professor of Oceanography  
University of Hawaii  
Honolulu, Hawaii*

## Alternatives to lecture method

The Keller psi method (SN: 4/21/73, p. 261) sounds like a programmed instruction method developed by my former teacher, J. Marion Martin, now in the science department at Southeastern Community College, at Whiteville, N.C. Columbus County is a sparsely populated rural area with below-average income.

Martin has developed study packages, consisting of cassette lectures, experiments and quizzes. When ready a student asks for his test, and can ask for additional tests up to a limit if he is not satisfied with his grade. He then goes on to the next package. A special system keeps track of student effort, and counseling is available. Hours are the student's option.

He reports students are enthusiastic, often refusing to accept less than an A. Many spend more time than they would in a regular scheduled course. He says also that when students transfer to regular four-year colleges, they do well. However they are frustrated by the measured pace and "antiquated" lecture style of instruction.

*W. J. Cole  
Muskegon, Mich.*

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