

science news®

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COVER: Ordinary leaf displays unusual pattern of light flares when photographed with the Kirlian photographic process that involves placing an object on film between two metal plates and applying high-frequency voltage. Though the phenomena involved is not well understood, the process may bring gains to several scientific fields. See p. 202. (Photo: Psychic magazine)

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september 29, 1973

to the editor

Special astronomy issue

I wish to compliment you on the magnificent cover of the special astronomy issue (SN: 8/18-25/73).

Alex Gorlin
Rego Park, N.Y.

Reading the special astronomy issue of SCIENCE NEWS was a sheer delight. Thanks for such an intriguing effort.

Ira Sugarman
Beverly Hills, Calif.

Thank you for your August issue on astronomy. It was great!

Francis L. Bitney
Kalispell, Mont.

Lately SCIENCE NEWS seems to have added spark to an already lively presentation of scientific information. I find its additions since I've first subscribed (Kendrick Frazier's editorials, double issues, "Off the Beat," etc.) give even more variety to the magazine.

The special astronomy issue I read with great delight, as it captured the mystery and excitement of modern astronomy. I would like to resubmit, for clarification, a relevant question that my eighth grade science class brought up last semester. Instead of the fantastically dense matter exploding, as the big-bang theory contends, why wasn't a black hole formed? Or was the radius of the "cosmic egg" larger than the Schwarzschild radius?

Louis Blazquez
Blauvelt, N.Y.

(Do any of our physicist readers want to try to answer?—Ed.)

How wise is hurricane control?

Considering the research note "Blanketing hurricanes" (SN: 8/18-25/73, p. 110), one wonders how wise such control of weather is. True, hurricanes do cause a lot of damage and loss of life. However, controlling these storms by applying a layer of chemicals on the ocean seems, at least to me, to be introducing possibly greater risks. Recently we have heard of the follies of years of preventing all forest fires—since for forests to be productive, controlled fires are necessary. Is it not possible that hurricanes also serve some useful purposes? Surely, the method described (i.e. to prevent evaporation) will have an effect on the water cycle,

which may do more harm than a hurricane.

Furthermore, the application of chemicals onto ocean water may have a detrimental effect on ocean life.

I believe there have been a number of precedents that serve to remind us to "look before we leap" (i.e. what seems like a quick and easy solution to one problem may in reality cause many, more serious ones).

Please continue your excellent coverage of scientific developments.

Alvin Stern
Haddonfield, N.J.

IBP's last lap

Thank you, and thank Joan Arehart-Treichel, for the International Biological Program "Last Lap" story (SN: 9/8/73, p. 156). I was glad to be brought up to date on the IBP's progress.

I'm an industrial physicist working in heavy chemicals, but feel a need to know about the various biomes.

Frank Alexander
Swarthmore, Pa.

Child growth

I have been reading SCIENCE NEWS for a few years now, and adore the magazine. It is well-written, interesting and informative. I can't picture being without it.

The article "An improved corn may retard growth" (SN: 8/11/73, p. 86) intrigued me. I am interested in knowing if it is felt that a high carbohydrate diet in children who get other nutritionally sound and balanced foods in addition to perhaps too many carbohydrates could cause a decrease in secretion of growth hormone. Has work with this ever been done, or is it only in relation to the particular carbohydrate in the opaque-2-mutant corn?

Lois Ann Horowitz
Fair Lawn, N.J.

(We checked with a pediatric endocrinologist. He says that no studies have been conducted to determine whether too many carbohydrates along with a normal diet, will affect growth hormone or growth. However he doubts that there would be any significant change.—Ed.)

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