

# Science<sup>®</sup> News

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Incorporating Science News Letter

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**Cover:** All the news that's fit to drink: a whimsical view of a new process developed by University of California professor Charles R. Wilke to create sugar and ethanol out of recycled cellulose. Newspapers are shredded, ground and mixed with an enzyme extracted from a fungus culture. The resulting mush is filtered and recirculated to remove the sugar, glucose (on treadmill). This sugar can then be fermented and distilled to produce ethyl alcohol (dripping into bottle) so cheaply it may be used as a clean-burning fuel. See p. 195 (Illustration: Ann Beyer Lunsford)

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March 23, 1974

# To the Editor

## Bouquets and Brickbats

Thank you very much for your issue devoted to science education (SN: 3/2/74, p. 139). The article on medical education exhibits two problems that many educators seem to have trouble dealing with.

The first is the need for traditional delineation of subject matter and roles as apparently occurred at the Georgetown University. The whole concept of the interdisciplinary approach to the teaching of basic sciences in medicine necessarily deals with a breakdown in traditional lines of material presentation. It requires much time and effort on the part of faculty to come to grips with concepts with which they have never dealt previously. Or else, it requires the hiring of new personnel who are able to deal with the changes and have some prior experience, training or study in the area. To implement a new system with old techniques and concepts tends to defeat that system and quite often leads to frustration of many of the parties involved.

The second problem exhibited itself in Harvard's curricular experiment. The only method by which a new system can be evaluated is to devise a proper evaluation to test the new system; i.e., one should not base conclusions of efficacy of a program simply on testing the new program by old techniques of testing. Harvard's fall in standings on the National Boards should not be a measure of success of their new curriculum. Instead, if they find that goals of the new curriculum are successful, and those goals cannot be adequately measured by past testing evaluations, National Boards, then a new test must be devised to evaluate the product of that experiment.

It would be quite difficult to get meaningful measurements of the sun's illumination with a yardstick.

*Halley S. Faust  
Jefferson Medical College  
Bala-Cynwyd, Pa.*

The change in the format of SCIENCE NEWS provokes a quick, decisive and negative reaction.

I hope that this vague, popularized and

pseudo-philosophic presentation does not foretell a drift away from the precision characterizing science and essential in any communication medium whose aim is the communication of the scientific work product. I hasten to add that I do not mean by this to exclude the normal range or speculative and philosophic reexamination so essential to progress even in a domain characterized by precision, but this Sunday supplement type of treatment and display seems completely out of character for SCIENCE NEWS.

*George V. Eltgroth  
Stamford, Conn.*

I wish to commend you upon your special issue on science education and upon your SCIENCE NEWS weekly issues in general. I started reading the publication when it was known as SCIENCE NEWS LETTER and you have improved it considerably. In particular, the versatility you show impresses me along with the courage you use in selecting your articles. Controversial articles should be included since all "new" science seems controversial to someone at some time. However, you don't overdo it. I like that too! The broad scope of your publication is the reason I pick you over many others. I'm glad to see more advertising too.

Like most of your readers, I want to know a little (at least!) about all the sciences.

*Darrell Rice  
Nashville, Tenn.*

I was amazed that not once was involvement of a science-oriented museum mentioned in your special issue on science education. Implied is that science education can only occur within the realm of traditional academe. Ridiculous! I suggest a review of museum education is in order.

*Don J. Starkey  
State Museum Consultant  
Kansas State Historical Society  
Topeka, Kan.*

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