

Science[®] News

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Incorporating Science News Letter

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COVER: Particle-physics proceedings that were once thought impossible are here recorded in bubble chamber pictures. They are interactions under the aegis of the weak force that do not involve exchange of electric charge. The history of the theory that predicts them goes back to the early 1950's. See p. 340. (Photos: CERN)

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May 25, 1974

To the Editor

Glucose and cancer cells

In the article describing our work on the metabolism of normal and transformed chick cells growing in tissue culture (SN: 4/6/79, p. 229) it was erroneously stated that we report "some success in killing transformed cells using glucose transport inhibitors." Certainly we have made no such claim, and we are not optimistic that an inhibitor of glucose transport which is selective for the transformed cells will be found. As the article indicates, we have evidence that many of the previously observed differences in metabolism between "normal" and transformed cells may be related to the rate of uptake of glucose. Naturally, this focuses our attention on glucose transport and leads us to employ transport inhibitors in an effort to learn more about the phenomenon and the reasons for difference between the cells. Perhaps it was our mention of this work in progress with inhibitors which led to the misstatement of our claims.

Mina J. Bissell

J. A. Bassham

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Darwin's prescience

In view of recent evidence that pigeons may navigate by using the earth's magnetic field (SN: 4/13/74, p. 241), it might be worth calling attention to a "lost article" showing Darwin's uncanny prescience in this matter. The article, "Darwin and Fabre: A Sidelight," by Arthur Porges (SCHOOL SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS, November 1961), tells, in a sprightly and entertaining way, how Darwin, of the wide-ranging, speculative mind, gently persuaded the skeptical, narrow, devout, anti-theorist J. H. Fabre (whom Darwin called the "incomparable observer") into fastening tiny magnets to bees to determine if their homing ability was impaired. The article is well researched and written and deserves wider circulation.

Bradlaugh Wood
Pacific Grove, Calif.

A place to put used razor blades

Since matter and radiation cannot escape from a black hole perhaps that "mini" black hole NASA is going to find (SN: 4/13/74, p. 244) can be used as a garbage disposal for all the radioactive waste products the nuclear-power-plant solution to the energy crisis will generate. Thanks for an always interesting and informative magazine.

G. S. Jankowski
Bremerton, Wash

Europa's radius

We should like to point out a misprint in your recent article "Measuring moon by moon" (SN: 4/13/74, p. 241) where you refer to an analysis by us of seven occultations of Europa by Io. The radius 1,830 kilometers that you quote for Europa is actually Io's radius, which was very accurately determined from a star occultation in 1971. Our analysis of mutual occultations gave the value $1,530 \pm 50$ kilometers for Europa's radius. One further result from our analysis and that of others is that there seems to be evidence for a bright polar cap on the north pole of Europa.

K. Aksnes
F. A. Franklin
Smithsonian Institution
Astrophysical Observatory
Cambridge, Mass.

The surface of Mercury

You have devoted considerable space to the Mariner 10 findings about Mercury, and it occurred to me that you might be interested in publishing this poem.

*A sun of monstrous width beams fiercely
down*

*On battered features, moonlike craters, plains
Devoid of mountain ridges; brought to grains,
The rocks disperse below this tyrant frown
Of sunlight; at its utmost peak and crown
Of glaring, this ferocious heat disdains
The melting point of lead; at night it wanes
To frigidness beneath the fragile gown
Of some slight atmosphere that barely clings
Tenaciously to this harsh barren world,
This scorched and frozen rock that
smoothly swings*

*In long eccentric orbit while it turns
In slow rotation; yet, with spirits bold,
Our ships may search this globe that
chills and burns.*

Wade Wellman
Milwaukee, Wis.

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