

SCIENCE NEWS®

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COVER: The big bang wasn't a beginning. It was a boundary between space-time volumes of opposite character. Such cells alternate, checkerboard fashion, through the cosmos. So says Fred Hoyle. See p. 386. (Photos: Hale Observatories and Doubleday)

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JUNE 14, 1975

LETTERS

Blue eyes, 30-love

My wife has brown eyes; mine are blue. After reading "Eye Color and Pain Sensitivity" (SN: 5/31/75, p. 350), I remarked to her that she might be interested to know that her eyes were probably less sensitive than mine to pain. "Oh, I know that," she responded. "How?" I asked.

She and others with whom she regularly plays tennis have observed for some time that those individuals with brown eyes have considerably less difficulty in serving into the sun than those with blue eyes. In fact, they allow for this when playing team matches by arranging their services so that any brown-eyed member will be serving into the sun while those with blue eyes will serve with the sun at their backs.

Clinton C. Brooks
Owings Mills, Md.

Magnetic map of earth

I want to compliment Jonathan Eberhart on his article (SN: 5/24/75, p. 340) describing our work with the POGO satellite magnetometer data. He did a superb job in translating our dry scientific material into something of interest to many people other than scientists specializing in this field. Indeed, for the first time, my family now understands what I do for a living.

Robert D. Regan
U.S. Geological Survey
Reston, Va.

Research on shyness

Sometimes science's "news" is not news because "science" is also carried on in the humanities. The behavior note regarding research in shyness carried on by Zimbardo and his associates (SN: 5/17/75, p. 321), for example, is not news to people in the field of speech communication. Research into the phenomenon began as early as 1935 with the work of Elwood Murray, and was carried on by a number of contributors ever since. In recent times, considerable research has focused on the phenomenon of "reticence," characterized as withdrawal from the avoidance of natural communication situations. Work in this area under my direction has gone on at Pennsylvania State for eleven years, and there are many other researchers like McCroskey at West Virginia, Muir at the University of Calgary, Hart at Purdue and others who are making contributions in the area of discovery of etiology and in treatment. The studies are published

in the journals of our field.

All of this argues for more cross-referencing in the Academy. Many of us so-called "humanists" read SCIENCE NEWS to keep up with the work of our colleagues in the sciences. Hopefully, they will keep up with the work we do, for we often dovetail and the insights that can be shared between us are legion.

I will be glad to supply reports on our research into the phenomenon of "reticence" for those interested.

Gerald M. Phillips
Director, Reticence Program
Department of Speech
Pennsylvania State University
University Park, Pa.

(We point out that the main Zimbardo conclusion was that "psychologists haven't taken shyness seriously enough." Psychologists obviously have some lessons to learn from people in the field of speech communication.—Ed.)

Peril of Florida's silt

Ms. Pendleton's article on Florida's dying coral reefs (SN: 4/12/75, p. 241) is interesting with regard to the action of cold water on warm water coral.

So the temperature of the water is contrary and may cause some damage, but the silt and sludge around Florida and the Florida Keys caused by extensive dredging, blasting, septic tank leakage, sewage and other pollutants are the No. 1 killers of coral and all kinds of life that take sustenance from the ocean. These are not just contrary, they are terminal cancers—as East Coast Floridians and concerned Americans realize.

We have sunk into silt up to our knees along the shores of the Florida Keys and have seen the suffocating layer of silt carried out by the tide and currents and deposited on the once beautiful living coral formations on the reefs three and four miles from shore.

The chill I feel is not caused by cold water, nor can it be helped by warm water.

Jean R. Englert
Grant, Ala.

They used it in Pimm's cup

The discovery of life under the ice shelf (SN: 5/3/75, p. 289), important though it may be, pales into insignificance alongside the discovery of shelf ice "100 to 500 kilometers thick." Modest chaps, these British scientists!

P. J. Wolf
Merced, Calif.

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