

SCIENCE NEWS®

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COVER: Point Reyes meadow foam, one of the wildflowers among the 10 percent of U.S. plants in danger of extinction. The Endangered Species Act was created in part to help save vulnerable plant life, but it is proving to be a ponderous bureaucratic weapon. See p. 92. (Photo: National Museum of Natural History, Smithsonian Institution)

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AUGUST 9, 1975

LETTERS

Preparing proper parents

With great interest and full agreement I read your brief summary of some of the problems of parenthood in the June 21 "Behavior" column. Alfred Adler recognized many of these problems, referring to them often in his writing. Indeed, he seems more and more to have been far ahead of his time.

In Ontario, TAIP and AAIO have been actively tackling parenting difficulties with courses, seminars, lectures, parent study groups, and a Parent's Conference and Teachers Conference to be held in September.

We try to focus on the extremely effective approaches to all aspects of family life suggested by Dr. Adler and Dr. Rudolph Dreikurs, among others, in a practical, day-to-day, common sense manner.

I would be interested in other similarly successful programs in North America and would be most happy to supply additional information concerning ours.

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Historical perspective

In the article "Further Signs of a Lopsided Universe" (SN: 7/19/75, p. 37), it is stated, "Even before Eratosthenes proved the earth was a sphere. . . ." A shameful assumption either through ignorance or a non-understanding of the history of science! Eratosthenes assumed the earth was a sphere in making calculations of its size. In his time the evidence such as stated by Aristotle was regarded as sufficient for belief. I don't think that anyone "proved" the earth was a sphere. It was just gradual accumulation of evidence. A question I often ask students in class is: "Suppose Eratosthenes had assumed the earth was flat. In that case what would his data have been used to compute?" Answer: the distance of the sun from the earth. It makes a lot of difference as to what your initial assumptions are.

A comment on "How do your Children Grow?" in the same issue (p. 41): "This finding . . . shocked psychologists, especially those . . ." etc. To infer that in general psychologists were surprised is to disregard the imposing number of behaviorists in the

30's to whom this information was a confirmation of their principles. The real surprise was not that the children benefited but that the feeble-minded women were so effective. In concentrating on the child, your article still neglects the idea of using the feeble-minded or senile for playing with children.

F. C. MacKnight
Professor, General Science
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Contraception by heat

Last year you published an article concerning the sterilization of male rats by treating their testes with heat (SN: 5/11/74, p. 309). I am very interested in finding out what final conclusions the research team, directed by Mostafa S. Fahim of the University of Missouri School of Medicine, came up with, and the implications they have for human subjects.

Your magazine is the best weekly science magazine around, and I am proud to be a subscriber.

Richard A. Steenblik
Tallahassee, Fla.

(SCIENCE NEWS talked with Fahim recently, and he says that his animal research using heat as a male contraceptive is going well, and that he plans to move into clinical trials soon. Fahim says that he is also having success in developing a birth control pill for pets.—Ed.)

Mingling in the deep

In the zoology research note "Energy saving sex in the dark abyss" (SN: 7/26/75, p. 59), it is mentioned that the male anglerfish attaches himself to the female with the result of their skins merging and their circulatory systems uniting. Could this indicate a possible approach in the prevention of tissue graft rejection?

It seems to me that the anglerfish might have some way to prevent the immune reaction that results from the mixing of blood with different proteins, unless it is accomplished by joining the circulatory systems with a placenta-like tissue that prohibits the mixing of incompatible blood elements.

Huan L. Lee
Burbank, Calif.

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