

SCIENCE NEWS®

A Science Service Publication
Vol. 108/November 1, 1975/No. 18
Incorporating Science News Letter

OF THE WEEK

Venus rocks	276
Tired light	277
Hungarian hominids	277
Depression: Motherhood	277
Permian extinctions	278
Gene mapping	278
Magnetotaxis in bacteria	279
Agricultural imperatives	279

RESEARCH NOTES

Earth Sciences	280
Agriculture	281

ARTICLES

Mars nomenclature	282
Physics: Industry dollars	284

DEPARTMENTS

Books	274
Letters	275

COVER: The process of choosing official names for surface features on other planets, such as the batch of Martian nomenclature recently adopted by the International Astronomical Union, is somewhat removed from smooth routine. See p. 282. (Illustration: Dale Appleman. Photo: NASA)

Publisher	E. G. Sherburne Jr.
Editor	Kendrick Frazier
Senior Editor and Physical Sciences	Dietrick E. Thomsen
Senior Editor and Behavioral Sciences	Robert J. Trotter
Biomedical Sciences	Joan Arehart-Treichel
Biology/Chemistry	Janet L. Hopson
Science and Society	John H. Douglas
Space Sciences	Jonathan Eberhart
Contributing Editor/ Mathematics	Lynn Arthur Steen
Copy Editor	Michelle Galler Riegel
Art Director	Dale Appleman
Assistant to the Editor	Susan Strasburger
Books	Margit Friedrich
Advertising	Scherago Associates, Inc. 11 W. 42nd St. New York, N.Y. 10036 Fred W. Dieffenbach Sales Director

Copyright © 1975 by Science Service, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS is prohibited.

Editorial and Business Offices
1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

Subscription Department
231 West Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$10; 2 yrs., \$18; 3 yrs., \$25. (Add \$2 a year for Canada and Mexico, \$3 for all other countries.) Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice is required. Please state exactly how magazine is to be addressed. Include zip code.

Printed in U.S.A. Second class postage paid at Washington, D.C. Title registered as trademark U.S. and Canadian Patent Offices.

Published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 1719 N St., N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. (202-785-2255). Cable SCIENSERV. Telex 64227.

NOVEMBER 1, 1975

LETTERS

A straight jacket for both sexes

I found two assumptions made in a number of letters to the editor on sexism and depression (10/4/75, p. 211) very indicative of sexism in action. The writers assume that a woman has to choose between being a mother-wife and being a professional. In addition, the assumption is made that she is more suited to the mother-wife role than the professional role, or more strongly, that she has evolved to be a mother-wife, and that her biology dictates that she can be happy only as a mother-wife.

To begin with the evolutionary assumption: Evolutionary data indicate that *Homo sapiens* has evolved to be more plastic (more capable of learning and, therefore, more influenceable by experience). Anthropological data are consistent with this and indicate an enormous diversity of sex roles practiced on this earth. Furthermore, sex role differentiation need not mean that women stay at home because men abstain from actively taking part in child rearing. Among the !Kung, for example (SCIENCE, Sept. 13, 1974, p. 932 ff.), the women left the camp off and on to gather food and men took an active part in taking care of the children.

It is true, of course, that the common sex roles employed in the U.S. today frequently force men to be away from home so much that they do not have time to be fathers to their growing children. And a substantial proportion of the men I know deeply regret this fact—as do their children and wives. The other side of the coin is that, for many women, being a mother-wife or being a professional is frequently an either-or choice. It's virtually impossible for one person to do a good job as a full-time professional and, simultaneously, as a full-time parent-spouse-housekeeper—be that person male or female.

Yet, if a couple decides to share the joys and heartbreaks of parenting, they cannot easily set about doing so. The current sex roles are institutionalized (through human rules). First, it is extremely difficult in today's job market for both parents to find stable part-time jobs—let alone part-time jobs in which they can be promoted. Second, Dads are less likely to get permission to be absent from work to take Johnny to the dentist or care for him at home when he is ill [THE JOURNAL OF APPLIED PSYCHOLOGY, 57: 172-178 (1973)].

The sex roles practiced most frequently today and institutionalized in the U.S. function as a straight jacket on both sexes. It's downright depressing.

Alida S. Westman, Ph.D.
Dept. of Psychology,
Eastern Michigan University
Ypsilanti, Mich.

Ronald S. Westman
Dept. of Zoology,
University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Mich.

It's interesting how many men responded to Marcia Guttentag and to Robert Trotter's "Sexism Is Depressing" (SN: 9/13/75). The men imply that it is working and not stereotyping that depresses women.

Men have a lot to say about women's lib; men seem to have too much to say about women, period. I stopped being depressed when I discovered what my role really is. I read *The Immaculate Deception* by Susan Arms and took her advice and had my last baby at home without anesthetic. The inner rewards of that delivery are still with me. I'm still breastfeeding this baby, and the hormones activated by this process are very relaxing. I'd like to have a baby every two years and breastfeed it until it is a year and a half so that I can remain fulfilled. But some man would accuse me of either or all of the following: 1) contributing to overpopulation, 2) contributing to pollution caused by overpopulation, 3) being an exhibitionist (if I breastfed in public) or 4) being a cow (I've already been called that).

Besides these reasons, economically I'd be called irresponsible because my husband and I cannot afford the three kids we have.

So please ask your letter writers what their stand is on welfare, food stamps, breastfeeding, natural childbirth, and women who stay home and don't get an education and have about 7 to 10 children. I'd be interested in knowing their answers.

Jane Hughes
Baltimore, Md.

Since this is a controversial topic, I am content to have everyone express their own views. Eventually after all, the truth will out.

Marcia Guttentag
Graduate School of Education,
Harvard University
Cambridge, Mass.

Address communications to Editor,
Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036

SCIENCE SERVICE

Institution for the Popularization of Science founded 1921; a nonprofit corporation

Board of Trustees—Nominated by the AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR THE ADVANCEMENT OF SCIENCE: **Deborah P. Wolfe**, Queens College of City University of New York; **Bowen C. Dees**, The Franklin Institute; **Athelstan Spilhaus**, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Nominated by the NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES: **Gerald F. Tape**, Associated Universities; **Allen V. Astin**, Bethesda, Md.; **Glenn T. Seaborg** (President), University of California, Berkeley. Nominated by the NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL: **Gerald Holton**, Harvard University; **Joseph W. Berg Jr.**, National Research Council; **Aaron Rosenthal**, National Academy of Sciences. Nominated by the JOURNALISTIC PROFESSION: **Edward Bliss Jr.**, American University; **Julius Duscha**, Washington Journalism Center; **O. W. Riegel** (Secretary), Washington and Lee University. Nominated by E. W. Scripps Trust: **Milton Harris** (Treasurer), Washington, D.C.; **Edward W. Scripps II** (Vice President and Chairman of the Executive Committee), Edward W. Scripps Trust; **John Troan**, Pittsburgh Press.

Director: E. G. Sherburne Jr.; Assistant Director: Dorothy Schriver; Business Manager: Donald R. Harless; Things of Science: Ruby Yoshioka.