SCIENCE NEWS®
A Science Service Publication
Vol. 110/November 27, 1976/No. 22
Incorporating Science News Letter

COVER: Complex patterns of expression of genes are controlled by the binding of a protein to sequences of DNA. On the chromosome of a virus called lambda, six sites have been identified where the regulatory protein can bind. The sequences of bases at these sites are similar. Diagram compares two of these binding sites. See p. 348.

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

Subscription Department
231 West Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302

Subscription rate: Until 12/31/76: 1 yr., $10; 2 yrs., $18; 3 yrs., $25. Afterward: 1 yr., $12.50; 2 yrs., $22; 3 yrs., $30. (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) TWX 710-822-9433 SCIEN NEWS.

LETTERS

Hoover overlooked

In your article "Of Science and the Election" (SN: 11/13/76, p. 309), I believe you have overlooked a past President who had considerable scientific training.

Many would consider former President Herbert Hoover's scientific credentials, put in the perspective of time, every bit as prestigious and valid as those of either President-elect Jimmy Carter or former President Theodore Roosevelt. Hoover's mining engineering background was outstanding, as was his knowledge and reputation in macroeconomics.

To ignore the service that this engineer performed while President, and in the years of government service after he was President, is a serious omission of history.

R. L. Bullock, Eng. D., P.E.
Fairfield, Conn.

(Several other readers have pointed out this error, which, of course, was an inexcusable oversight on our part. Hoover, in fact, was the only U.S. President to hold membership in the National Academy of Sciences.—Ed.)

Noah's Ark effort

Regarding Mr. Donald W. Stotler's response to "Endangered Species: When to Act" (SN: 11/13/76, p. 307), I embarked upon a similar project two years ago. At that time, I attempted to publish an expository article in three leading conservation-oriented magazines and the concept was rejected. The average citizen's distaste for the idea of future "test-tube" animals was understandable. Also, my fellow conservationists may have been afraid that public knowledge of such a "Noah's Ark" effort might encourage a relaxation of the current efforts to preserve habitat, wilderness and endangered species. I fully support the latter efforts but I agree with Mr. Stotler's assessment of the urgency of the situation. Future cloning is a valid back-up phase of my scheme but I have some practical proposals that can be implemented right now with current technology. It has been difficult to find moral and financial support for the "Noah's Ark" effort, but I am going to continue to try. I urge Mr. Stotler to do the same and I would be happy to communicate with other interested parties.

E. Primoff
15 Whitfield Terrace
New Rochelle, N.Y. 10801

Monkey mothers

Regarding your news item (SN: 10/30/76, p. 282) in which you cited Harry Harlow's surrogate mother primate studies as evidence for possible poor social adjustment in only children:

To equate the isolation produced in Dr. Harlow's experiments by depriving the infant monkey of *all* contact with other primates (in particular, members of his family) with the simple lack of sibling association of an only child would be untenable in any instance, but to publish such a statement in a "scientific" magazine is inexcusable.

S. P. Rust
San Antonio, Tex.

Direct conversion to electricity

Recently John H. Douglas's article on solar electricity (SN: 5/15/76, p. 316) came to our attention. In the part on photoelectrochemistry, a most amazing statement is made with respect to the CdSe electrode in a polysulfide electrolyte, viz. "Since this system cannot be used to produce hydrogen, the device as it now stands will probably not find commercial use." This statement presupposes that only hydrogen production by such a system will be of any commercial importance. However, we have argued recently that hydrogen production is not necessarily the best way to utilize a photoelectrochemical cell (NATURE 263: 97 (1976)) and that the direct production of electricity is to be preferred, especially now that efficient means of *in situ* electrochemical storage are being developed (NATURE, 261: 403 (1976); J ELECTROCHEM. SOC., submitted for publication).

David Cahen, Gary Hodes
Weizmann Institute of Science
Rehovot, Israel

Electric Auto

As much as the idea and technology appeal to all of us, the electric auto (SN: 10/2/76, p. 219) for high-mileage daily use seems very unlikely. The poor (30%) efficiency of central power stations, which supply primary power to rechargeable cars and most of the processing energy (cost) to primary cell cars, is too easily surpassed by fairly simple alternate fuel technology. Methane, methanol, etc., are just too easy to adapt to piston engines when the time comes as it came in Europe in the forties. The quickly expanding sales of all-electric low-daily-mileage town trucks and cars is good to see, though.

Jon P. Ramer
Orlando, Fla.