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COVER: Albert Einstein, 1879-1955. SCIENCE NEWS celebrates the 100th anniversary of the birth of this century's most prominent scientist. See pp. 210 to 220. (Painting by Josef Scharl, 1947, courtesy of the German Information Center)

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SCIENCE ON TV

SCIENCE NEWS prints the latest written word of scientific developments and noteworthy news. We've set this space aside to inform our readers of programs of scientific interest that are scheduled on television. Check your local listings for exact times.

• **"Universe,"** (CBS) a half-hour "science magazine" will debut in April—probably during the latter half of the month, although an exact date has not yet been set. Walter Cronkite will host the first show, which "opens with an animated portrayal of the first 20 billion years of the universe." Although there is no specific design set for the series, producer Ron Bonn says that each broadcast will probably contain three or four segments on theoretical ideas, health and current news items, as well as investigative pieces. While the fate of the series rides on the success of the pilot, it could start being shown on a regular basis by next fall.

• April 1 (PBS) National Geographic Society—"The Tigris Expedition" recounts the efforts of scientist-adventurer Thor Heyerdahl to sail a reed boat over routes he believes were followed by Sumerian traders 5,000 years ago. In what he considers his last venture across the oceans, Heyerdahl continued the scientific adventuring begun when he sailed the balsa-log raft *Kon-Tiki* from Peru to Polynesia in 1947.

An attempt to find out how far the "intrepid and culturally advanced" Sumerians could have traveled by sea led Heyerdahl to construct a 60-foot by 20-foot ship with the buoyant bardi reed of Iraq. In a four-month voyage Heyerdahl and his crew of 10 traveled down the Persian Gulf, across the Arabian sea to Pakistan and back again, and finally to the Red Sea—a 4,200-mile journey.

The program focuses on the motivation that compels a scientist to risk his life in the search for knowledge and on the idea that seas can be highways for cultural exchange rather than barriers.

• April 5 (PBS) NOVA—"Road to Happiness" tells the story of Henry Ford through the use of rare film footage that forms part of the extensive Ford Film Collection. The program was first shown in May 1978.

• April 17 (NBC) "NBC Reports: Reading, Writing and Reefer," originally broadcast Dec. 10, 1978, will be rebroadcast as part of NBC-TV's Special Treat series for young people. According to Robert Dupont, former director of the National Institute for Drug Abuse, "It is no longer uncommon for 12-year-olds, 13-year-olds and even younger people to be using marijuana on a regular basis." Although at one time Dupont helped work for the liberalization of marijuana laws, increased knowledge about the drug's effects has left him with reservations about its use, especially its effects on the growing-up process.

LETTERS

A partial answer

The complete answer to the question raised in "Human cloning: Partially achieved?" (SN: 2/17/79, p. 101), specifically, how the nucleus from a precursor sperm cell (spermatogonium) "might have fertilized an egg without a nucleus..." is not completely known. But the principle and procedure are. During the 1960s, J. B. Gurdon used the nuclei from intestinal cells of a tadpole and transplanted them into enucleated amphibian eggs. These eggs with the transplanted nuclei developed into tadpoles and some developed into sexually mature adult frogs.

Even as the nucleus of the usual fertilized egg

is diploid, so, too, are the nuclei of spermatogonia and intestinal cells.

It may be that the presence of a diploid nucleus is enough in itself to initiate cell division, cleavage, the start of embryo formation, and to complete embryogony.

Walter Lener, Ph.D.
Garden City, N.Y.

Bravo

Bravo to Michael H. Hart for his analysis of planetary continuously habitable zones (CHZ's) (SN: 2/24/79, p. 121).

I find myself on the edge of my chair with curiosity about the next logical step in his work, namely, deriving the expected number of habitable planets in the galaxy based on the probable number of stars of each type that can have planets whereon life could develop.

Thank you for your continuously fine magazine.

Fredric M. Blum
Bala Cynwyd, Pa.

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