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COVER: Saturn, with its rings and their shadow on the planet's cloud tops, photographed by the Pioneer 11 spacecraft from 395,000 kilometers away on Sept. 1. This view, processed to enhance the rings at the expense of the planet's coloration, shows the rings' anti-sunward surface, which earthlings virtually never see. Though some details are difficult to see in this image, clearly visible, from the bottom up, are the A ring, Cassini Division, B ring and C ring, followed by their shadows in reverse order. See p. 180. (Photo: NASA. Reproduction by Dunn Instruments, Inc.)

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

Subscription Department
231 West Center Street
Marion, Ohio 43302
Telephone (1) 800—247-2160

Subscription rate: 1 yr., \$15.50; 2 yrs., \$27.00; 3 yrs., \$37.50 (Add \$3 a year for Canada and Mexico, \$4 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. ISSN 0036-8423

LETTERS

East, West: What's best?

In reference to the Off the Beat "Mystic Physics" (SN: 8/4/79, p. 94), what is the controversy between Eastern metaphysics and Western physics? Surely we can learn much from both points of view. I know I have learned much from studying Eastern thought, but I feel their quietism is not properly tempered with a concern for and involvement in events of the physical world. Yet I also feel that Western man tends to lose awareness of his inner states, and tries to fulfill his inner needs through physical things even when this is neither appropriate nor effective.

I also feel that reality is far vaster and more profound than any of our models of it. However, by contemplating it and trying to understand it we are changed, and we grow in our sense of wonder as well as our understanding. We are human beings, both thought and feeling, and either one without the other is incomplete. Ideally, thought and feeling are in dynamic harmony, enriching and sustaining one another, just as matter and energy do.

(Incidentally, as a physics major in Berkeley in the early 60s, the resemblance between ancient metaphysics and modern physics struck me very forcefully.)

*Diana Davies
St. Paul, Minn.*

Pioneer 11 on the tube

I, for one, would ask for national coverage on television as well as newspaper on the Pioneer 11 transmissions from Saturn. We need as many ways as we can find to revitalize the American public's attitude towards science, technology and the space program.

*Chester Twarog
Aurora, Colo.*

Bringing Nessie to light

Your recent article on the Loch Ness monster (SN: 8/18/79, p. 122) proved most enjoyable, as I have just returned from a three-week stay in Scotland, visiting Loch Ness on August 7. I must say that the article brought to light some points that I hadn't seen before—not in the books that I got there. Your sense of timing, in this case, was superb. Keep up the good work!

P.S.: And no, we saw no trace of Nessie.

*Perry Glen Moore
Nashville, Tenn.*

Exhibit appreciation

In regard to the article "Evolution on Exhibit" (SN: 7/7/79, p. 10): I visited the exhibit and found it very informative. The ideas of differentiation, genetics, natural selection and speciation were easily comprehended.

Had it not been for your article I would not have been informed of the exhibit's existence and missed out.

*Debi Treweek
Gainesville, Fla.*

Sign language

In addition to enjoying the article "Reflections on a 10-Meter Mirror" (SN: 7/28/79, p. 76), I immensely enjoyed the sign that can be seen in the photograph of astronomer Sandra Faber, above her left shoulder (p. 77).

I am curious to know (1) if it is her sign, (2) if she believes it (I do), and (3) how many readers noticed it.

I most certainly enjoy SCIENCE NEWS, as I have for a goodly number of years. It is the one publication that I will not allow my subscription to expire. Continued success to you.

*Jerry Vogt
Berkeley, Calif.*

Space telescope vs. 10-m telescope

Concerning the proposal for a 10-meter telescope by the astronomers of the University of California (SN: 7/28/79, p. 76), I would urge a serious comparative analysis with a space telescope designed for the same purpose. Dr. Kuhl's idea for remote operation and automated operations will already be in effect on the space telescope. One would also envision engineering and design of a space machine as being cheaper than an earth machine. Evaluating transportation costs of a space telescope vs. a 14,000-foot observatory in the late 1980s might also yield an interesting comparison.

*Louis D. Friedman
Washington, D.C.*

A foreign language

It seems that I am being forced to go metric because many people do not understand the English system of units. A clerk in an appliance store goes blank when I ask for a 0.10-hp electric light bulb. And that isn't clarified by saying, instead, a 55-ft-lb s⁻¹ bulb. The result is no better when trying to buy a 1.33-hp electric iron, that is, a 44,000-ft-lb (min)⁻¹ or 22 ft ton (min)⁻¹ iron. Since the overall efficiency of a utility's system of boiler, steam turbine, electric generator and transmission lines is about 33 percent, one could use a number three times as great in each case and thus give the energy input per unit time at the central power station. But all that probably wouldn't help either.

I also encounter a total block when trying to get a 0.315-in. movie film, and when requesting a diet menu which will provide 10,000 Btu a day. When will they learn English?

*M.R. Wehr
Havertown, Pa.*

Correction: The diagram accompanying the story "Vive la maser: New French development" (SN: 8/11/79, p. 102) was not a schematic of a Rydberg master but rather a diagram of the opto-acoustic technique described in the article "H₂O: An absorbing story" on that same page.

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