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COVER: In 1979 we said "Happy Birthday" to Einstein and "Good-bye" to Skylab. There was trouble at Three Mile Island, and active volcanoes were sighted on Io. And that's only part of this year's story. See the SCIENCE NEWS Year End Review p. 434. (Cover design by John Ellis)

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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

To subscribe call: (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)
ISSN 0036-8423

LETTERS

No skeptic

I think the article "Monkey Business at Pitunda" (SN: 11/24/79, p. 364) reported the events which occurred at the IXth International Symposium on Comparative Research in Leukemia and Related Diseases and reflected the feeling of the scientists that cancer in man and lower animals is the result of a complex interaction between a variety of components.

As was pointed out by Professor Lapin and Dr. Rabin, the baboon colony at Sukhumi USSR provides an excellent primate model of human disease where carefully controlled experimental work can be conducted to examine this complex disease. For the past several years our laboratory has been involved in a very productive, rewarding collaborative effort with Professor Lapin and his colleagues at Sukhumi. The results of these joint studies have indicated that *Herpesvirus papio* is associated with this outbreak of spontaneous lymphoma in baboons as both Professor Lapin and I had pointed out. It is my personal opinion, and one that I'm sure I share with my colleagues at Sukhumi and at Frederick, that more experiments remain to be done before we can say conclusively that the virus causes the disease. Therefore, I was amazed that this approach would suggest that I was a skeptic of Professor Lapin's theory. My comments to Ms. McCann were intended to convey the fact that the study of disease and its transmission is very complex and that I feel more data are necessary before the word proof can be used regarding the causation of this disease. These comments were not intended to refute anyone's theory but to emphasize that a theory is a testable hypothesis which through experimentation will lead to the truth.

Russell H. Neubauer, Ph.D.
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Hypnosis: Con and pro

As a clinical psychologist in my 26th year of practice, the only quarrel I have with Joel Greenberg's superb article about "Jim Jones: The Deadly Hypnotist" (SN: 12/1/79, p. 378) is the misleading conceptualization of hypnosis as "an interpersonal process in which the hypnotist requires the subject to close all his channels of communication with the external world except one: the voice of the hypnotist... there are no other channels available to check the truth of the hypnotist's statements..." (italics mine). During the hypnotic state, no matter how "deep" it may be, the hypnotizee's cognitive apparatus is totally intact at all times. If, however, his/her intellectual background (education, etc.) does not include adequate yardsticks for the assessment of data inputs, then of course he/she is a patsy for whatever "information" the hypnotist wants to inculcate.

A case in point is my own recent experience with a well-known hypnotist who (during a "quit smoking" session) saw fit to inform me that "nicotine is *not* an addiction." Knowing full well that the American Medical Association had in fact placed it on its List of Addictions only a few months previously, I instantly lost rapport with my hypnotist—and kissed farewell to \$150 for his one-shot "cure." To my way of thinking, Jonestown is a tragic and unforgettable monument to the fact that humankind's worst enemy is *ignorance*.

Meanwhile, onward and upward with SCIENCE NEWS — a remarkably informative and exemplary publication.

Bradford Wilson
Kendall Park, N.J.

Since Jim Jones did indeed control the minds and habits of his followers, it was clearly not through hypnotizing them in the true sense of the word, for *hypnotism is a consent state*. The subject is keenly aware of all that is being said, all that is going on around him, and *at worst* will do and say nothing that he would not do or say after, for example, a few drinks. One's moral and ethical principles still control his actions in hypnosis.

Far from being controlled, a hypnotized person is quite able, and often does, reject suggestions, even such a trivial one as to clasp the two hands together, if that action has a negative meaning to the subject.

Few medical schools taught hypnotism until very recently, and even now the uses made of hypnosis are limited. We wonder whether Drs. Lasaga and Ulman, quoted in your Dec. 1 article, were ever hypnotized themselves to know what it "feels like."

In all fairness to a remarkable science, we earnestly hope you will give equal space to a careful article about the present usages of true, ethically performed hypnosis. Its uses:

- to stop bleeding — even in hemophiliacs;
- to heal fractures and other wounds in amazingly short times;
- to cure or control diabetes, arthritis, aging processes, emotional problems;
- to overcome obesity, smoking, drug-related problems;
- or to improve performance in studies, sports, arts, music.

Incidentally, after a brief, well-taught course in self-hypnosis, a person can do all these things for himself.

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Correction: We omitted to mention that it was Malcolm Anderson who used the flow measurement in dogs successfully (SN: 10/16/79, p. 233).

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