

## THIS WEEK

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**COVER:** Normal nerve axons are surrounded by protective sheaths of myelin. When multiple sclerosis strikes, this sheath disappears, resulting in an interruption of nervous impulses. This, in turn, affects vision, sensation and the use of the limbs. Although the hows of multiple sclerosis are known, the whys are not. But research on many fronts is beginning to shed some light. See p. 76. (Photo courtesy of Cedric S. Raine, Albert Einstein College of Medicine)

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# LETTERS

## Adventure in space

The adventure undertaken by the World Space Foundation (SN: 11/21/81, p. 328) is just the kind of experimentation needed to make deep-space exploration cost-effective and (eventually) relatively inexpensive. The accomplishments of the wsf to date are significant in that they demonstrate that meaningful deep-space research need not be government-sponsored or government-inspired. Hopefully, in the spirit of the "little red schoolhouse" of Freeman Dyson (*Disturbing the Universe*, Chapter 9), other approaches will be explored so that an optimal deep-space transportation method is developed. The amateur character of this effort is appealing because it indicates that space exploration is open to individuals and small groups with dreams and ideas.

*George W. Symthe  
Yonkers, N.Y.*

## Space cuts: Fighting back

Regarding Ann McDonald's letter (SN: 12/12/81, p. 371): Yes, there is someone to get in touch with to combat the NASA budget cuts.

The Campaign For Space Political Action Committee was formed in March of 1980 to fight further cuts to NASA's budget by getting directly involved in the political process. After all, the space program was born of politics, has declined because of politics and will revive when the space constituency becomes directly involved in politics.

The entire House of Representatives and one-third of the Senate stand for election in 1982. The Campaign For Space will support the election of pro-space candidates with direct financial and in-kind contributions. Interested readers are urged to write for more information on how they can help:

The Campaign For Space  
P.O. Box 1526  
Bainbridge, Ga. 31717

*Thomas J. Frieling  
Bainbridge, Ga.*

Please tell Ann McDonald and other concerned readers that there are organizations that can join that support space exploration and lobby vigorously against the cuts in space. ... [T]here is the Viking Fund (for the Viking Mars probe) and the Halley Fund (for a Halley's comet mission). The address for them is:

The Viking (or Halley) Fund  
357 Saratoga Ave.  
Santa Clara, Calif. 95050

The advantage of contributing to these funds is that the money goes directly to the mission.

*Ted Apelt  
Miami, Fla.*

In response to the query of Ann McDonald as to whom she could contact to voice her opposition to recent cuts in the NASA budget, I suggest that she contact The Planetary Society.

## SCIENCE SERVICE

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The Planetary Society was founded last year by Dr. Carl Sagan, the Pulitzer prize-winning Cornell astronomer, and Dr. Bruce Murray, the director of NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory. They serve as President and Vice President of the Society. It has become the largest space-interest group in the world, with more than 90,000 members, and the fastest-growing organization of any kind in America in the last decade.

With the United States abrogation of the first international space exploration mission (the International Solar Polar Mission) the postponing again of the Galileo mission to Jupiter, the rejection of a mission to intercept Halley's comet, and the prohibition of the use of any NASA funds to prepare for the search for extraterrestrial intelligence, individuals who support planetary exploration and the search for extraterrestrial life must band together to make their voices heard.

Correspondence may be addressed to:

The Planetary Society  
P.O. Box 3599  
Pasadena, Calif. 91103

*Anthony Thomas Lesnick  
Westland, Mich.*

## News by any other name

While anthropology and archaeology have often been construed as sciences that deal with almost anything ever done by mankind, there are probably some (paleontologists and ornithologists) who would object to fossil molluscs, 180-million-year-old jawbones, and the rediscovery of the bowerbird in New Guinea being included in the archaeological and anthropological "Science News of the Year" (SN: 12/19 & 26/81, p. 404). It is not uncommon to identify oneself as an archaeologist at a cocktail party and be assailed by stories of dinosaurs and other non-hominid fossils, but we found it hard to decide just why the bowerbird item was included as anthropology and archaeology—perhaps because only anthropologists would ever go to New Guinea?

*J. I. Ebert, T. R. Lyons, D. L. Drager  
Albuquerque, N.M.*

## When a cover is not a cap

It was gratifying to see included in your "Science News of the Year" section for 1981 a mention of the shrinkage in Antarctic sea ice cover recently reported by Kukla and Gavin (SN: 12/19 & 26/81, p. 405). Unfortunately, in your item the sea ice was referred to as the "Antarctic ice cap." The term "ice cap" properly refers to "a dome-shaped glacier" "resting on rock" (quotes from Armstrong, Roberts and Swithinbank, "Illustrated Glossary of Snow and Ice", Scott Polar Research Institute Special Publication No. 4, 1966) rather than sea ice cover. The distinction in the context of CO<sub>2</sub>-induced warming is more than academic, since the shrinkage of the land-based ice on Antarctica would imply a rise in sea level, whereas the shrinkage of sea ice extent over the ocean does not.

*Charles R. Bentley  
Madison, Wis.*