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Letters

Unlimited hypocrisy

A quick comment on the APA's statement of its position on insanity pleas and expert testimony relevant thereto ("Shrinking the insanity defense," SN: 1/29/83, p. 68): Is there *any* limit to the hypocrisy we must accept from supposed intelligent people? The APA on the one hand objects to psychiatrists' judging whether or not a particular person "was able to distinguish right from wrong, appreciate the criminality of his behavior, or control his behavior," and on the other hand, states "sociopaths' should be held responsible for their behavior." Too bad no one holds the APA responsible for making sense! In fact, the whole idea of expressing an opinion on whether or not psychiatrists should provide opinions as experts in trials is self-contradictory. And less excusable is the blatant moralism of the specific recommendations for release of patient-criminals. If we can't judge the criminality of his behavior we just can't judge the criminality of his behavior... we can't conclude he's dangerous!

In a quick count, I find nine "shoulds" and a couple of "musts" attributed to the APA, all going to explain that psychiatrists should not

This Week

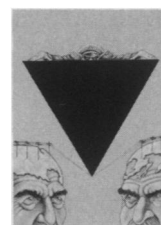
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Cover: Led by the Department of Defense, the federal government has been pressuring the lines of communication between U.S. and Soviet scientists. The resulting slowdown of the international flow of scientific information has set off a wave of concern among scientists in both countries. (Illustration by Donna Ward)



Departments

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use "should"... talk about a neurotic paradox!
Mindy L. Harrison
Riverdale, Ga.

Tough little creatures

I am much taken with two articles in the Feb. 12th issue dealing with, on page 103, the laying down of the clay layer by some sort of cataclysm 65 million years ago which wiped out many kinds of life on earth, and the article on page 107 reporting the discovery of noctuid moths' fossil egg dated at 75 million years of age. It might be interesting to speculate, during "the ongoing debate," just what survival mechanism Noctuidae possess that has enabled it to last more than 75 million years calamity or no.

Asteroid impact, volcanic activity, tectonic shifts, climatic changes due to any one or a combination of all these, Noctuidae seem to be pretty tough little creatures.

What didn't happen was something that would have eliminated the moth.

Jackson Beck
New York, N.Y.

A grim joke

America is drastically behind in technological education and basic research to the tune of

several million jobs. We need every bit of equipment we can find to train young scientists. Despite this, Ohio Wesleyan University, a so-called institution of higher learning which no doubt gets millions in subsidies from the government to support scientific education in America, has seen fit to sell off a radio telescope for a golf course ("Fore! Pulling turf from under a telescope," SN: 2/12/83, p. 101). A golf course? If I hadn't read of it in SCIENCE NEWS I would have thought it was a joke.

Perhaps Nikita Khrushchev was right; we will bury ourselves with our own greed.

James W. Mooney
Kingston, Pa.

Correction: In "Geothermal Powerhouse" (SN: 3/19/83, p. 186), the bottom photo on p. 187 should be credited: Washington Energy Office. Also, it is not always the case that geothermal leases do not expire if no geothermal sources are found, as stated on p. 189. Geothermal leases are issued for a period of 10 years and can be extended for another 40 years or more, according to the Forest Service in Washington, D. C.

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