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Letters

Nuclear holocaust and ecology

The article by Janet Raloff, "Beyond Armageddon" (SN: 11/12/83, p. 314) presents, in my view, a powerful, as well as frightening account of the aftermath of a nuclear war. Until reading the article, I was largely uninformed about the probable cataclysmic climatic effects associated with nuclear holocaust. SCIENCE NEWS deserves credit for publishing a fine article focusing on this apparently very important aspect of nuclear war and its aftermath. I also feel that articles, such as the one by Raloff, may potentially play an important part in helping to shape public policy on issues associated with nuclear war.

Leo Uzycz, J.D., M.P.H.
Wallingford, Pa.

A hymn to a dance

I was impressed by Penny D. Sackett's article "A Computer-Generated Cosmic Portfolio" (SN: 10/29/83, p. 282).

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Cover: When Galileo first built his telescope, he put it to work for political advantage, one historian claims. As a result, he ignored important scientific questions, and may have ended up cribbing a pivotal idea about the Copernican solar system. Here he is demonstrating his telescope for viewer John Milton. (The Bettmann Archive)

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Ideas and lucid explanations danced like a well-choreographed pavane. Congratulations for presenting such an enjoyable write-up!

G.D. Brin
San Diego, Calif.

More on Mickey Mouse

Re the report on the psychohistory of Mickey Mouse (SN: 9/10/83, p. 172): Stephen Jay Gould, in his book *The Panda's Thumb* (W.W. Norton and Co., 1980), devotes an entire chapter to the progressive juvenilization (neoteny) of Mickey's physical features that has gone hand-in-hand with his "mellowing out" over his fifty-plus year history. As Mickey became increasingly subdued and well-behaved over the years, his appearance became more youthful. He evolved a larger head size in relation to body size, larger eyes, and an enlarged and rounder cranium. Gould promulgates the fascinating idea that these features of juvenility trigger an almost automatic surge of affection and tenderness in human beings, whether it be innate or simply learned from our immediate experience with babies. ... Gould raises the possibility that the

Disney artists, perhaps subconsciously, effected the change in Mickey in a somewhat piecemeal fashion over the years. Whether this is actually the case or not, Mickey's softened physical features must surely have played a part in our overall opinion of him.

T. M. Hennig
Wichita Falls, Tex.

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