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## Letters

### On game playing

Your taking note of the non-appearance of the Russians at scientific meetings is well taken (SN: 8/4/84, p. 72), but we felt sociologist Harry Edwards's statement that he'd be reluctant to go to the Games, too, was totally uncalled for. The Russians' decision to boycott the Olympics was a matter strictly of their politics. The security they wanted consisted of a separate compound for their athletes with 24-hour guards, and separate, police-escorted vans to transport their people from place to place. That was all their athletes were going to be allowed to do in "participating" in Los Angeles, and it sounds

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Cover: From the simplest life forms all the way to humans, the basic question of why sex exists is being probed by researchers. (Illustration: Courtesy, Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. Centennial gift of Landon T. Clay)



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### 147 Letters

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awfully much like they wanted to transport the Berlin Wall to our town.

Your uncritical repetition of the Russians' complaints about security at the Games is a failure of your editorial responsibility to present *all* the facts. As it turned out, the only problem we had in those two weeks, security-wise, was one nut who wanted to guard a bus of athletes by himself, and he was swiftly recognized and removed from the scene. In a city of 12 million, that's not a bad batting average.

Everyone in the United States is entitled to have an opinion about everything, but *some* opinions should not be promulgated as being authoritative because it undermines every

chance we have of getting the Russians to stop *their* malevolent form of game playing.

Ursula T. Gibson  
Tujunga, Calif.

### Airing out ambulances

In "When ambulances are a hazard to health" (SN: 7/7/84, p. 8), it was reported that an unhealthy level of carbon monoxide showed up in the patient area of many ambulances during the trip to the hospital. This is especially dangerous because of the fragile health of the passengers. Several suggestions have been made to

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overcome this danger, such as keeping the rear windows closed and relocating the exhaust pipe.

I would suggest that the latter offers the best hope for improving the situation, provided 1) that the new location is above the roof level of the vehicle, and 2) that a venturi system be placed at the outlet to send the exhaust gases up and back, away from the ambulance.

Arthur J. Morgan  
New York, N.Y.

You state that no federal CO limits exist; this is not the case. Please note that the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) enforces an 8-hour time-weighted average permissible exposure limit of 50 parts per million (ppm). (See General Industry Standards 29 CFR 1910.1000.)

Deborah S. Green  
Minneapolis, Minn.

You are correct about the OSHA limit. It doesn't, however, apply to vehicle occupants who are not employed by the ambulance service — namely, patients — nor does it apply to employees of state, county or local governments that have not adopted OSHA standards as their own. According to OSHA spokesman Chris Graybill, if the ambulances in New Jersey were privately operated, then the OSHA CO standard would indeed be applicable. Interestingly, he adds, the state's publicly operated vehicles are in fact exempt from that same standard.

— J. Raloff

### Another side of the web

In your article "Acid Rain's Political Web" (SN: 7/28/84, p. 58) it is stated that "most current legislative proposals to control acid deposition would cost between \$3 billion and \$6 billion per year . . . and raise electricity costs by as much as 10 or 15 percent. At the same time, coal mining jobs in the East would be lost, and Midwestern industries and utilities that use a great deal of energy would suffer."

This statement reflects one particular way of framing the problem, a way that implicitly strengthens how one will respond. In order to demonstrate this, consider the following rendition:

"Midwestern electricity users have been allowed to pay \$3 billion to \$6 billion less per year than the actual cost of their electricity. Mining jobs in the East have been created or maintained that cannot be justified economically, and Midwestern industries and utilities which use a great deal of energy have been enjoying a free lunch."

Kahneman and Tversky have shown experimentally that the particular way a situation is framed can influence one's response. I wonder if their findings can somehow be incorporated into scientific reporting so that it is more the objective situation, and less the way the situation is framed, that influences behavior.

William Vaughan Jr.  
Dept. of Psych. and Social Relations  
Harvard Univ.  
Cambridge, Mass.

Referring to your article on acid rain, the argument against controls contains the statement "many people in his area would not have

been able to afford the higher electric rates required by the new controls." I feel that this is a rather specious argument. The complete cost of an environmentally acceptable system should be accountable to that system. This again points out the double standard being used against nuclear energy. Opponents claim that nuclear-generated electric energy is costlier than coal, but of course the considerable costs involved in making the system as environmentally safe as possible are charged to that system (quite properly). The same standard should be applied to coal plants.

This situation also illustrates another case of placing jurisdiction in the hands of small, artificial entities like states. The problem transcends those entities and should be placed in the hands of larger governing bodies: national, or more properly, international.

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