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Letters

Flatland fans

Ivars Peterson's article about the 100th anniversary celebration of the publication of Edwin A. Abbott's *Flatland* ("Shadows from a Higher Dimension," SN: 11/3/84, p. 284) struck a responsive chord here. I had known that mathematicians and science fiction fans continued to read *Flatland*, but it was interesting to learn of Abbott's influence on artists and that he had stimulated other authors to describe other "flatlands."

Just as Thomas Banchoff and his fellow mathematicians use *Flatland* to aid in "visualizing higher dimensions," we in optometry have been using *Flatland* to enhance visual behavior. We use it as one of a number of aids to help our patients improve their visualization as part of improving their visual function.

Walter J. Kaplan
Gaithersburg, Md.

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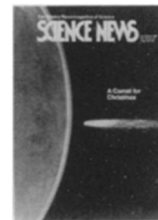
- 362 The Making of a Comet
Cover: An artificial comet—a glowing cloud of barium ions—is scheduled to be generated from a satellite in the predawn Christmas sky, as an international team of scientists and others look on. (Illustration: Johns Hopkins APL)

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At any rate, thanks for the interesting article.
Alison Chaiken
Boston, Mass.

Survival in the streets?

"Redesigning mental health care" (SN: 10/6/84, p. 216) underscores the plight of the hundreds of thousands of institutionalizable mentally ill who have been cruelly dumped into the "community." These *miserables mentales* wander the streets or languish in exploitive "care facilities," suffering and dying with their rights on.

A "revamping" of mental health delivery? Nonsense! Our neglected, underfunded and understaffed state mental hospitals need to be restrengthened and resupported to admit and care for those unable to survive anywhere else.

Donald B. Rinsley
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Kansas City, Kan.

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