

Letters continued from p. 51

more common among animals in nature than we realize, even when other toxic gases were not present.

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### On gibing generative grammar

It never ceases to amaze me how the remonstrances toward generative-transformational theories of grammar (Letters, SN: 12/14/85, p. 371) forge on as an exercise in futility. The science of linguistics has been laden with ambiguities through the years; nevertheless, they must be coped with openly and honestly.

Infinitude, as related to grammar, simply extends the possibilities of the deep, unconstrained structures of a given language to limitless surface (i.e. real) ramifications. It does *not*, as the letter from Robin Ault implies, constitute trillions of words forming arbitrarily long sentences.

What seems obfuscated to Ault concerning the nature of the *best* grammar perhaps never will be perfectly clear. However, if one is bound and determined "to capture and display understandable patterns of a language," then what is deemed by the finitists as counterfeit and specious, re mathematical elegance, just may be the most tenable avenue to pursue in coalescing the morphophonetic, syntactic and semantic components of all languages. Mathematical frameworks have served us well in the past, specifically in nuclear physics, to determine actual or virtual existences of the fundamental constituents of matter.

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### Strings spring back

To the folklore about causes and remedies for deadening of guitar strings as discussed by Hanson and Munns (SN: 11/23/85, p. 329), may I add this. In 1964, shortly after taking up classical guitar, I too concluded that corrosion and dirt between adjacent turns of the winding wire, and perhaps also internally between the nylon filaments and the winding, are the culprits. The highest overtones are affected most because, with their short wavelengths, they require the string to flex with many short-radius bend reversals, so any friction that either impedes or absorbs energy from this multi-flexing hastens the decay of such vibrations.

To lubricate this flexing and to perhaps delay corrosion, I tried Teflon spray (DuPont "Slipspray") applied to new strings, and once or twice later to rejuvenate deadened strings. This prolonged useful string life considerably.

If the boiling in vinegar treatment, mentioned as part of the folklore, works, I would suggest that an ultrasonic bath used with an appropriate solvent or soap solution might work even better. However, any rejuvenating cleaning treatment would be most effective if it could be applied to a string in its stretched state to take advantage of the minute gaps opened between turns.

Charles Klabunde  
Oak Ridge, Tenn.

Correction: The Jan. 4 cover photo credit should be Master Sound Astoria.

JANUARY 25, 1986

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### Tucker's Law (a sampling)

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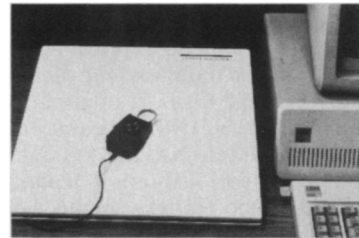
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