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Letters

Output tests gone overboard?

Surely the whole world can see that to spend three months and \$75,000 to determine the energy output of a device slightly more complex than an electric motor ("NBS report short-circuits energy machine," SN:7/5/86,p.8) is gross incompetence.

If Joe Newman is eventually required to pay this amount, it would be a terrible injustice and an ugly precedent. Imagine why an inventor should try and obtain a patent when any test the Patent and Trademark Office contracted might be charged to him (especially at such excessive prices).

As to the invention itself, Newman's claims are very dubious, not just from the conflict with basic physical laws but also from the fact that Newman has not taken the next obvious step with the device. Since the mechanism has surpassed break-even, some of the energy should be able to be returned to the input and make the battery pack unnecessary during continuous operation. (The battery pack would still be required as a starter.) This has

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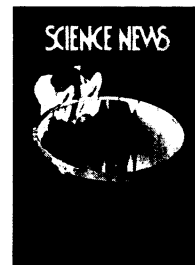
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Cover: Canadian astrophysicists peer into their new telescope mirror, a spinning container of liquid mercury. (Photo: Université Laval)



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not been done.

As a more efficient motor, it is possible, and from previous research, I have found that there is some room for improvement in the basic electric motor.

H. Enslé
Association Camp, Colo.

During my engineering career I have looked at many new energy devices and tested a few of them. I fail to see what should make it so difficult to test a motor, including Newman's energy machine.

The input is the battery, the output torque times rotational speed. Since the input consists of pulses at low current, a low ohmic resistor in the current path connected to a scope should take care of that. For the output, any of the common devices, from calibrated paddle wheel to the many-cradled energy absorbers, would do nicely. For a first assessment there is no need for gold-plated equipment. To find out whether a bolt is 6 or 10 inches long, one doesn't need a micrometer. There is no need to assess brush and bearing friction, windage of

the rotor, etc. These are all losses. Including them in the output would make any motor 100 percent efficient.

I'm not saying it's impossible. I'm not saying a horse can't talk. I just get wildly curious when I hear about either one.

Herbert Reimann
Sandston, Va.

Psychiatric drug implants

Musing on the great variety of people who may benefit from controlled-release drug implants ("Planting the Seeds for Better Drug Delivery," SN:7/19/86,p.44) brings to mind one particular group: the noncompliant chronic psychiatric patient.

If the long-term administration of psychiatric drugs can be developed, then the tremendous human suffering and societal cost of repeated hospitalizations can be reduced. The maintenance of therapeutic drug effects is critical in the success of the necessarily long

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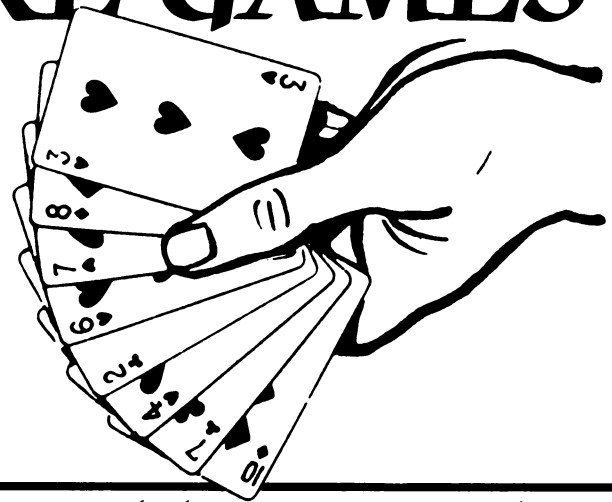
150 SOLITAIRE GAMES

By Douglas Brown

Everyone knows how to play Canfield, the basic solitaire game of seven vertical rows, but what about such entertaining versions as Deadly Deuces, Floradora, Marriages, Twilight Zone or San Juan Hill?

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treatment process of this sizable population.

*Robert Boyce
Mental health technologist
Willingboro, N.J.*

Right day, wrong century

Stanley Kubrick named his famous movie "2001, A Space Odyssey" for a very good reason: He wanted it to begin in the *next* century and he knew that the first century ran from A.D. 1 to the year 100, the second from 101 to 200, and the 21st from 2001 to 2100. This is because there was no year zero.

Therefore, your writer of "Rickover dead at 86" (SN:7/12/86,p.22) was incorrect in stating that Adm. Rickover "was born . . . on the 27th day of this century," since he was born on January 27, 1900, not 1901.

A lot of misinformed people are going to get drunk on the night of Dec. 31, 1999, thinking they are celebrating a new century and a new millennium. I don't suppose there's much hope you and other "esoteric" publications can make them understand their error, but please, don't perpetuate the error yourselves!

*Bill White
Miami, Fla.*

Autism and autoimmunity

Immunological abnormalities in autistic patients ("Immunology of autism," SN:7/26/86, p.58) were reported several years ago by Abraham Weizman et al. They demonstrated that many autistic children have an immune response to myelin basic protein, a component of the myelin sheath that covers many nerves. Myelin basic protein contains a serotonin (and LSD) binding site. Because serotonin lev-

els are abnormally high in many autistic children, some of whom respond extremely well to the serotonin-lowering drug fenfluramine, it has been suggested that the abnormal serotonin levels are directly related to the autoimmune response to myelin basic protein. Serotonin, in turn, has a definite modulatory effect upon the stress peptide, ACTH, which in turn regulates corticosteroid production, which modifies immune responses.

Thus, Robert Moulias's suggestions that neurotransmitter disturbances in autism affect the immune system, and that autoimmunity may be a cause of autism, are probably both correct. Could immunosuppressants therefore alleviate some or all of the symptoms of autism?

*Robert S. Root-Bernstein
Neurobiochemist
Veterans Administration Hospital, Brentwood
Los Angeles, Calif.*

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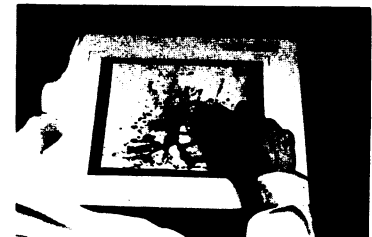


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