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Cover: A young marijuana plant glistens with crystals rich in psychoactive delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol. Although marijuana has been used for millennia as a medicinal, the U.S. government says it has no accepted medical value. Proponents of pot-by-prescription are taking their case to court. (Photo: Ed Rosenthal)
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Letters

Hail and Farewell

As a poet delighted not only by the discoveries of physics but also by its serendipitous and colorful nomenclature, I have been surprised by the reticence of those probing for new fundamental forces to name them.

As I was reading "Evidence for New Force — May Be No. 6" (SN: 12/19&26/87, p.388), Hail and Farewell struck me as apt designations: the former for the attractive Force 6, apparently dominant from a few feet to hundreds of yards over the repulsive Force 5, its influence more circumscribed to a range approximating distances habitual for conversation. The gladiatorial allusion, too, has much to recommend it, given their contention for supremacy, however transitory.

Less abstract than the equally anthropocentric Beauty and Charm, Hail and Farewell have the further advantages of the balance

and tangential anthropomorphism of Sunrise and Sunset.

Daniel Zimmerman
Metuchen, N.J.

The chicken, or the egg?

Re your report on new research supporting the old Air Force myth that fighter pilots are more likely to sire daughters than sons ("What do you suppose B-forces make?" SN: 12/12/87, p.377): Is it possible that cause and effect are reversed here? Could it be that that type of occupation attracts a certain type of man, and that that type may in some way be more likely to sire daughters?

Hal Hellman
Leonia, N.J.

Some years ago, while employed at NASA at a randomly selected division, I surveyed all the bosses to determine the sex of their children. The result of my small survey

showed that of 19 bosses contacted, 9 had all girls while only 3 had all boys, and the ratio of all the girls of the bosses to all the boys was over 2:1. This, of course, did not mean that being a boss made one have girls.

Since I assumed the rest of the employees had the then-prevailing average ratio of girls to boys (100:94), my conclusion was that girls gave their fathers a lot of self-esteem, which is a characteristic required not only to seek a boss's job but also to seek a fighter pilot's job. Thus there is a strong possibility that men become fighter pilots because of having more girls rather than the other way around.

A second characteristic I noticed is that compliant married males tend to sire children of only one sex. Since fighter pilots must be compliant to cope with all the tin-soldier rules and regulations and safety precautions, any second or third children born during training or while on active duty would tend to be also girls.

A. P. Sabol
Lewisburg, N.C.

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