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This Week

- 356 Rare Amino Acids Support Impact Theory
- 356 Sperm capture genes to create new life
- 357 Scientists find new HIV-host subtleties
- 357 High 'I do' blood-test dues
- 357 Gene test foretells Type I diabetes risk
- 358 Catching a light ride on a plasma wave
- 358 Bye-bye Alar
- 358 Diverse recipes shine in the sun's corona
- 359 Schizophrenia gene: A family link fades
- 359 Questioning the cooling effects of volcanoes
- 359 Serum albumin seen in three dimensions

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Research Notes

- 366 Biomedicine
- 366 Chemistry
- 367 Environment
- 367 Physical Sciences

Articles

- 360 Backward Genetics
- 364 Avian Altruism

Cover: Home for the gregarious African bee eater is a hollowed-out burrow in the eroded cliff wall of a river bed. These birds live in multigenerational clans and usually mate for life. Through direct observation of birds fitted with leg bands and color-coded wing tags, scientists have found that mated bee eaters often enlist relatives to help them rear young nestlings. Such altruistic behavior entails a cost for the "helper" but benefits the family as a whole. (Photo: Nataie J. Demong)



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Departments

- 354 Books
- 355 Letters

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Letters

AIDS counseling crucial

The excerpt of a quotation attributed to me in "Mail-Order AIDS Tests" (SN: 4/29/89, p.268) inadvertently carries an implication that I did not intend and is not accurate. The full sentence in the statement I submitted to the FDA on behalf of the College of American Pathologists reads as follows:

"Of even greater concern, however, is the profound medical, emotional and psychological impact of a positive result upon an individual who may be presented with what he or she assumes to be a virtual sentence of death without the advice and support of a competent and experienced professional."

It is true that the great majority of individuals who are shown after careful repeated testing and confirmatory testing to be HIV-antibody positive will eventually develop clinical manifestations of AIDS or related

disorders. Although at present most of these unfortunate patients will eventually succumb to AIDS, with appropriate medical care the time period for this progression may be as long as 10 years.

The intent of my statement was to point out that, in the absence of adequate counseling, the individual receiving a "positive" but unconfirmed test result may incorrectly believe he or she has received a "virtual sentence of death," and inappropriate and self-damaging acts may result.

The College strongly believes that at the present time, AIDS testing must take place within a public health and medical framework in which confidentiality, face-to-face counseling and careful laboratory testing are guaranteed.

*Paul Bachner, M.D.
Chairman, AIDS Task Force
College of American Pathologists
Port Chester, N.Y.*

SCIENCE NEWS article honored

Steve Eisenberg, a SCIENCE NEWS intern during the spring of 1988, will receive first prize from the Institute of Food Technologists "for outstanding writing on a food science or technology topic for 1988." Eisenberg won the award, consisting of \$1,000 and an engraved plaque, for the article "Looking for the Perfect Brew" (SN: 4/16/88, p.252).

The article examined the controversy over caffeine's health effects and detailed the difficulties in interpreting epidemiologic studies of tea and coffee drinkers.

Eisenberg, currently a reporter for the Ann Arbor (Mich.) News, also won a runner-up award for the article "Diet Supplements: Wisdom or Folly?" published in the News on Oct. 6, 1988. The institute will present the awards June 26 at its annual meeting in Chicago. The contest drew 103 entries.

JUNE 10, 1989

355