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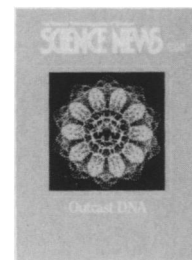
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Cover: Most scientists have assumed that DNA, shown here as a single molecule viewed from one end, resides only in the nucleus and mitochondria within a cell. But in the past two decades, some biologists have reported discovering it bound to cell surfaces as well. Recent findings strongly point to DNA's presence on cell membranes, prompting speculation about a possible physiological role for this exiled nucleic acid. (Image: © Regents, University of California/Computer Graphics Laboratory, UCSF)



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Letters

On moderation and morals

I found "Where Acids Reign" (SN: 7/22/89, p.56) informative but somewhat disappointing. Janet Raloff's moderate tone is characteristic of the "oh no, let's not sound like environmentalists" school of science and journalism. This is somewhat understandable when so much research on this problem is funded by power companies. However, I expect a higher moral standard in SCIENCE NEWS.

I challenge scientists, journalists and legislators to tell it like it is. We are at a critical time. Placing stringent controls on pollution is the least we can do to slow the rapid spiral of degradation now turning our planet into a wasteland.

Though I commend Raloff for the conclusions reached in her summation, I can only hope the general public gets the message.

Timothy Kohchi
New York, N.Y.

SCIENCE NEWS sees its "higher moral standard" as reporting scientific findings and their implications as accurately and fairly as possible. We leave advocacy, especially in areas where data are incomplete or conflicting, to others.

— the editors

Reforestation on the road

I have an idea to help offset the tree destruction that threatens to intensify a future greenhouse warming ("Surveys slash away at forest estimates," SN: 8/19/89, p.124). The United States is carpeted with superhighways. All have grass-covered median strips that are maintained regularly at great expense. If these median strips could be planted with trees, deciduous ones down the middle and evergreens down the sides, it would go a long way in helping to counteract the 1.2 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide we now spew out yearly. The evergreens on the sides would help keep the leaves in the middle,

where they could decompose and provide nutrients for both kinds of trees. This idea would even put the carbon-dioxide-using trees where some of the gas is being produced. It would also save the energy needed to mow the medians.

Nurserymen's associations could get involved by recommending the best trees for each area and perhaps providing them at cost. Beautification committees, environmental groups, service clubs and concerned citizens would all have a common cause.

We complain about Third World countries destroying trees and the environment, but we do the same, contributing 20 percent of carbon dioxide's total greenhouse effect. We must counteract it ourselves, and do it on "wasted" land that will never see a saw.

Nancy Irving
West End, N.C.

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