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## Letters

### Joggers are normal, too

In "Menstrual glitches may spur bone loss" (SN: 11/3/90, p.279) you state: "The group consisted of 21 marathon runners, 22 recreational joggers and 23 women with normal activity levels."

As a recreational jogger who thinks of herself as normal, I can't let this one pass without comment. Who's *normal*? Women are browbeaten enough into thinking that being a couch potato is normal. Don't reinforce it!

Margaret Hood  
Platteville, Wis.

*Your point is well taken. In relation to the general population, the 23 women had "average" activity levels. Clearly, however, one need not be average in order to be "normal."*

— K.A. Fackelmann

### Protective prospects

It is good to see that fans with filters for radon daughters in home air are being investi-

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Cover: When a thief looted this 770-year-old Anasazi basket from an archaeological site in Utah, visions of dollar bills danced in his head. But dirt found in the basket's stitching enabled law enforcement agents and scientists to identify the object as property stolen from federal land. The forensic use of such high-tech soil tests provides a powerful new weapon in the war against archaeological theft. (Photo: U.S. Forest Service)

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gated ("Home Radon Hazards: All Too Real," SN: 10/27/90, p.260). A good, inexpensive home radon monitor is badly needed to show exactly where radon leakage is greatest so that anti-radon measures will be most effective and least expensive.

Home furnaces that burn oxygen create a slight vacuum inside the home, and the vacuum pulls in outside air and underground gases. Less pressure difference might be created, especially in tightly insulated modern homes, if there were a pipe to take outdoor air directly to the furnace. Gusts of air coming through the pipe would have to be tamed. This is another invention worth working on.

I've long wished for an inexpensive, portable Geiger counter (with attachable paper graph) to continuously monitor home air, drinking water, food, farm crops, etc., for X-rays and gamma, beta and alpha rays/particles. I know of no home and farm monitors for nuclear dumps or for food and drinking water that may be contaminated. As it is now, people put their trust in the monitors of nuclear facilities, and in the technicians who monitor those moni-

tors. Such trust is frequently abused.

Joanne Ashley  
Manlius, N.Y.

### Leftovers again?

Perhaps the reason herbivorous dinosaur coprolites are scarce ("The scoop on dino droppings," SN: 10/27/90, p.270) is that they have been consumed by carnivorous dinosaurs. I'm making the analogy with jackals and wild dogs, which eat the droppings of the herbivorous herds they follow — provided, of course, they can't bring down the animal itself.

Art J. Morgan  
New York, N.Y.

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