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Letters

Letters on letters

Richard S. Nicholson of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (Letters, SN: 3/28/92, p.195) errs when he suggests that SOLSTICE: AN ELECTRONIC JOURNAL OF GEOGRAPHY AND MATHEMATICS does not transmit tables and figures. SOLSTICE is typeset using TeX, and it is the TeX file that is transmitted, complete with typeset tables as well as complicated mathematical notation. Indeed, SOLSTICE has even run (in addition to scientific tables) an occasional crossword or word search puzzle simply to suggest this perhaps unexpected capability. It also transmits some figures — any that can be set using TeX. SOLSTICE does claim to disseminate scientific results in an electronic form, and not only does it claim to do so, it does so.

One might hope that representatives of a society that claims to promote the advancement of science would be more interested in promoting the general idea of electronic jour-

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Cover: The sun (yellow dot) and surrounding stars reside in a local hole, or bubble, in space — a relatively gas-free region containing little of the patchy fog of hydrogen atoms that bathes most of our galaxy and readily absorbs extreme-ultraviolet radiation. Thus, astronomers expect the Extreme Ultraviolet Explorer, a NASA satellite scheduled for launch in early June, to detect thousands of sources of extreme-ultraviolet light within the hole. (Photo: NASA)



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nals than they are in worrying about who is first.

Sandra Lach Arlinghaus
Director, Institute of Mathematical Geography
Founding Editor and Publisher, SOLSTICE
Ann Arbor, Mich.

Curt Wiederhielm (Letters, SN: 4/4/92, p.211) attempted to correlate the K-T meteorite impact near the Yucatán and possible volcanic eruptions on the other side of the Earth with a type of head injury called the contrecoup injury. I confess I know very little about geology, but as an emergency physician I understand the mechanism of this type of blunt head trauma relatively well, and I feel I need to clear up the inaccurate information presented in this analogy.

The brain is enclosed by the skull and is bathed in cerebrospinal fluid, in which it is cushioned and actually floats. When the head strikes a hard object and the skull comes to a rapid stop (deceleration), the brain continues

briefly to travel in the same direction inside the skull box, striking the inner aspect of the skull and becoming bruised. This is the so-called coup injury. It then can bounce backward against the opposing inner skull table (contrecoup injury), producing bruising on the opposing side. This has nothing to do with a "shock wave" or specific geometry of the skull, but the fact that the brain is freely movable to a degree inside a hard skull container. On a more familiar level, it is like the unrestrained driver who collides with an object and snaps forward, then backward, before coming to a rest inside the vehicle.

Petra Illig-Workman
Kent, Wash.

CORRECTION

In "Pig intestine yields versatile tissue graft" (SN: 4/18/92, p.246), the acronym SIS stands for small intestinal submucosa, not small intestinal mucosa.