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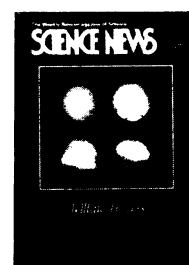
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Cover: The advancing waves of color — from green to yellow to red to magenta — reflect increases in calcium concentrations in a sea urchin egg during fertilization. Scientists monitor these chemical changes with molecules customized to fluoresce in response to particular environments. (Photo: Janet Alderton and Richard Steinhardt, University of California, Berkeley; Martin Poenie, University of Texas at Austin; and Roger Y. Tsien, University of California, San Diego.)



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**Science Service**, a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921, gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Program it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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## Letters

### On women's need for iron

In the last paragraph of the article "Excess Iron Linked to Heart Disease" (SN: 9/19/92, p.180), Jerome Sullivan concludes, "adults should avoid iron supplements unless they have iron-deficiency anemia." It would be more accurate to state that men, and women after menopause, should avoid iron supplementation.

Too often, results from research on men only have been generalized to all adults. Women with heavy periods and pregnant women, although they may not show clinical signs of anemia, may need iron supplementation to maintain adequate blood values and iron stores. Many of these women are certainly adults and could be misled by Sullivan's comments.

Mary S. Sheridan  
Waianae, Hawaii

### Ancient quake, modern danger?

The evidence of an earthquake in the Israeli coastal plain is important because it may be associated with a hidden fault either offshore or under the coastal plain ("Skeleton opens Dor to ancient quake," SN: 10/31/92, p.303). Most of the country's population is concentrated there, so the hazard associated with such a fault may be significant.

There was concern about this hidden fault even before the discovery of "Doreen" because of the biblical description of the earthquake during the battle between King Saul's army and the Philistines (around 1020 B.C.) at Michmash. "... [A]nd there was a trembling in the host . . . and the earth quakes; so it was a very great trembling . . . and behold the multitudes [of Philistines] melted away . . ." (1 Samuel 13). Ancient Michmash was at the eastern edge of the coastal plain east of Tel Aviv; the earthquake epicenter may have been near there.

In any case, it is quite possible that "Doreen"

was killed by the 1020 B.C. earthquake. It is also likely that earthquakes will recur in the future.

Amos Nur  
Professor of Geophysics  
Stanford University  
Palo Alto, Calif.

**I would like** to make one minor correction. While I wish that we had found coins with the skeleton, so far all coins have appeared in the upper (Persian, Hellenistic, and Roman) levels of the excavation.

If we turn up evidence to indicate that the invention of coinage in Lydia around 600 B.C. should be backdated 400 years and ascribed to Israel, we will certainly let you know!

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