

SCIENCE NEWS®

The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

Science Service Publication
Volume 143, No. 7, February 13, 1993

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SCIENCE NEWS (ISSN 0036-8423) is published weekly on Saturday, except the last week in December, for \$39.50 for 1 year or \$68.00 for 2 years (foreign postage \$6.00 additional per year) by Science Service, Inc., 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20036. Second-class postage paid at Washington, DC, and additional mailing office. **POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to SCIENCE NEWS, P.O. Box 1925, Marion, OH 43305. Change of address: Four to six weeks' notice is required — old and new addresses, including zip codes, must be provided.

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Editorial and Business Offices:
1719 N St., N.W., Washington, DC 20036
(202-785-2255)

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Subscription Department:
P.O. Box 1925, Marion, OH 43305
For new subscriptions only, call 1-800-247-2160.
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Letters

Planning and luck vs. rock and roll

Regarding "Blame Elvis for Japan's competitiveness" (SN: 11/28/92, p.383), I have just finished reading *Made in Japan*, the story of Akio Morita and Sony. The strategies and fortuitous circumstances surrounding the rise of Japanese electronics are much more than a by-product of the early popularity of rock-and-roll music in the United States.

The U.S. company mentioned in the article made several conspicuous errors in marketing; Mr. Morita had a particular conviction of the appropriateness of his ambition; and there were several other factors that made it possible for the transistor radio to enter our lives as dramatically as it did at that time.

SCIENCE NEWS and "archaeologist" Schiffer would be well-advised to seek some information from the horse's mouth, so to speak.

Lou Judson
Sausalito, Calif.

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Cover: Dangling from a rope, an Antarctic researcher descends into a crevasse that splits the surface of Ice Stream B, a fast-moving current of ice in West Antarctica. Near this region, geophysicists have detected an active volcano under the ice sheet — a finding that scientists must consider as they attempt to determine whether the ice blanketing West Antarctica will slide catastrophically into the sea.
(Photo: Ian Whillans/Ohio State University)



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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It 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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Sleep apnea and hypertension

In "Rest for the weary dialysis patient" (SN: 12/5/92, p.398) there appears to be a confusion of cause and effect on the part of Dr. Benz. I do not believe that dialysis causes sleep apnea: It is more likely that sleep apnea and other sleep disorders contribute to kidney failure by causing hypertension.

I have suffered from sleep apnea since about 1969. Once I was correctly diagnosed and treated, my problem with slowly increasing blood pressure went away completely, despite the fact that I am still overweight, over 40, and both of my parents are hypertensive. After about a week of using a nasal CPAP [to stimulate regular breathing], my blood pressure went down to its current 110/70, without medication or change in diet.

I learned at the sleep center I attended that hypertension is a common symptom of sleep apnea, since sleep apnea is extremely stressful. So it should not be a big surprise that sleep apnea victims are disproportionately repre-

sented in the dialysis patient population. Training physicians to recognize sleep disorders could have a substantial impact on the number of future dialysis patients.

Howard Harkness
Bedford, Texas

You are correct in stating that dialysis does not cause sleep apnea. Benz maintains, however, that kidney failure and the associated excess of nitrogen wastes in the blood may eventually prove the cause of sleep disorder in dialysis patients.

— D. Pendick

What price low cholesterol?

So "low cholesterol helps to produce depression" in old men ("Depressing news for low-cholesterol men," SN: 1/16/93, p.37).

Probably has something to do with the realization of all the good times and tastes forsworn for that sacred low number.

Rocky Curtis
Alexandria, Va.

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