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Cover: Researchers studying autistic and brain-damaged individuals are investigating the neurobiological underpinnings of people's ability to interact with others. These paintings by autistic artist Jessica Park portray stained-glass doors in a home in Brooklyn, N.Y., during the four seasons (clockwise from left: spring, summer, fall, winter). (Photos: TGL Photoworks)

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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 Programs 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

And now, a word about sponsors

After decades of first-rate work, the credibility of the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) is scarcely open to question. The same cannot be said of the American Farm Bureau Research Federation (AFBRF), publishers of a report extolling the wonders of continued pesticide use ("Reassessing pesticides' value," SN: 1/29/94, p.79).

In the interests of accurate reporting, it would have been appropriate to report the major sources of funding for the AFBRF and the Agricultural and Food Policy Center at Texas A&M. My guess is that both organizations are heavily funded by the chemical industry.

D. B. Tyler
Berkeley, Calif.

According to Marsha Purcell, director of AFBRF, state and county farm bureaus throughout the United States provided roughly 62 percent of the

funding for the study. Most of the remaining support came from individual farmers or farm cooperatives (commodities groups such as cherry growers). Owing to the nature of the study, Purcell said, her group consciously avoided soliciting funds from corporate donors, such as chemical companies and pesticide makers. Donald Knutson and the report's other four authors from Texas A&M University obtained their funding from AFBRF.

— J. A. Raloff

Of course fruit and vegetable yields will diminish when the amount of pesticide is reduced. You're still killing the beneficial insects and leaving the pests that have developed resistance to chemical control.

Mitchell James
Vestal, N.Y.

Getting to the roots of cancer risk?

Women who dye their hair are probably concerned with their appearance ("Mixed news on hair dyes and cancer risk," SN: 2/5/94, p.86). Being concerned with appearance, these

women may also exercise and eat correctly, thus decreasing their chances of cancer.

My point is that the lower risk of fatal cancers among women who use permanent hair dye may result more from their lifestyle than their hair color.

Brett Babar
Thoreau, N.M.

Rocks made by human hands?

"Siberian Site Cedes Stone-Age Surprise" (SN: 2/5/94, p.84) omits a crucial question that has plagued archaeologists at various sites for more than a century: Are those broken rocks from the Diring site demonstrably the products of human workmanship? Among my own archaeologist colleagues who have seen one or more of Mochanov's presentations and examined his specimens, the answer is an almost universal — and resounding — negative.

Don E. Dumond
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