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Cover: Many animal species engage in homosexual activities, which help to boost reproduction—though often indirectly, scientists have argued. Now, animal behavior researchers, such as those studying rams at the U.S. Sheep Experiment Station in Dubois, Idaho, are finding other explanations for why some animals fancy their own sex. (Photo: Anne Perkins)
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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921 to increase the public understanding of science. Through its youth programs, it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair and the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse science scholarships.

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SCIENCE NEWS

Unproductive Partner?



Letters

Tracking tornadoes

The statement attributed to Wurman that "...nobody has been able to get up close to a tornado with a radar before" ("Radar Catches a Tornado in the Act," SN: 6/22/96, p. 388) is incorrect.

In 1993, Bluestein and his colleagues reported the first measurements of a tornado's wind speed with a radar from a range of 1.6 kilometers. The approximately 270-mile-per-hour winds remain the highest tornado winds ever measured by radar. Other researchers have also studied tornadoes with radars, notably Roger Wakimoto and his colleagues.

The recent Doppler on Wheels (DOW) mobile radar measurements done by Wurman and his colleagues have resulted in the first three-dimensional maps of a tornado's structure as it evolves through time.

We plan to extend our studies of the structure, maintenance, and formation processes of tornadoes, using upgraded versions of the two DOW radars and an upgraded high-reso-

lution 3-millimeter radar. The DOW radars will collect dual-Doppler vector wind field data with a 40-meter or finer resolution. The 3-mm radar will be able to resolve structures as small as 10 to 15 m at a 3-km range, possibly permitting the first measurements of suction vortices in a tornado.

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CORRECTION

In "Volcanoes under ice: Recipe for a flood" (SN: 11/23/96, p. 327), two picture credits were inadvertently switched. The satellite image appears courtesy of the European Space Agency, the Tromsø Satellite Station, and James Garvin of NASA. The picture of the chasm in the ice sheet was provided by Oddur Sigurdsson of the National Energy Authority in Iceland.

Wanted: Science poetry

"Dust off your riming dictionaries, rumple up the pages of your favorite physics, chemistry, or biology books, set your poetry mill to working." Thus began a request almost 75 years ago for "tidbits in which poetry and science are pleasingly combined."

In celebration of 75 years of publication, we again request "Poems, verses, rimes, jingles, or what-have-you" for inclusion in the special anniversary issue of SCIENCE NEWS and SCIENCE NEWS ONLINE scheduled for March 1, 1997. As before, "They must express accurately some scientific fact or situation."

Send previously unpublished contributions by Feb. 1, 1997, to: Poetry, SCIENCE NEWS, 1719 N Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036. E-mail to: scinews@scisvc.org. Include your name and address. Submissions cannot be acknowledged or returned. Authors of the poems chosen will receive a small prize.