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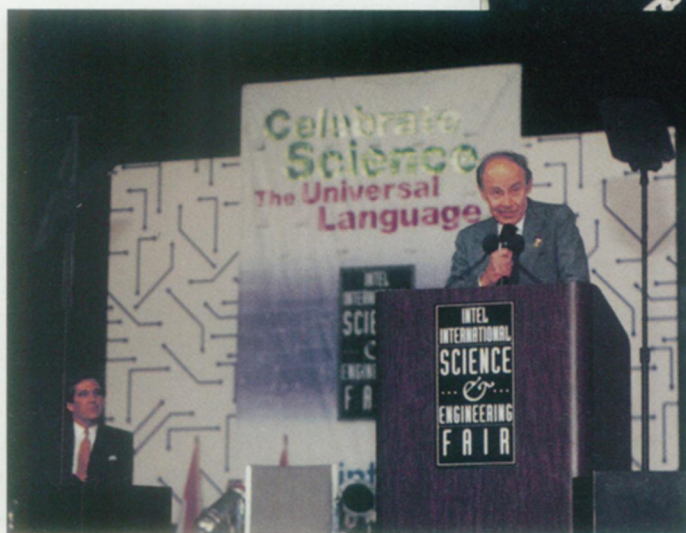


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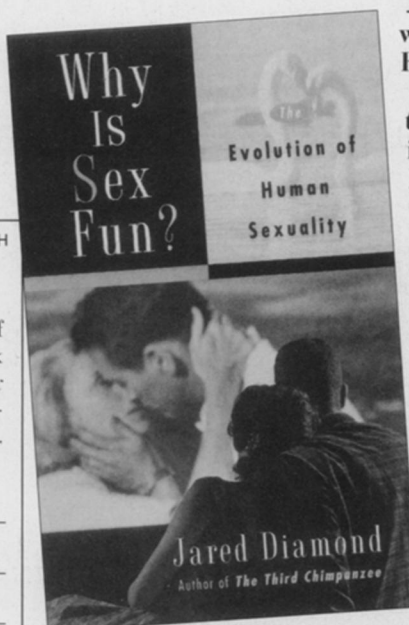
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Tus humans, the sex lives of many animals seem weird. In fact, by comparison with all the other animals, we are the ones with the weird sex lives. How did that come to be?

Just count our bizarre ways. We are the only social species to insist on carrying out sex privately. Stranger yet, we have sex at any time, even when the female can't be fertilized. A human female doesn't know her precise time of fertility and certainly doesn't advertise it to human males by the striking color changes, smells, or sounds used by other female mammals.

Why do we differ so radically in these and other important aspects of our sexuality from our closest ancestors, the apes? Why does the human female, virtually alone among mammals, go through menopause?

There is no one better qualified than Jared Diamond—renowned expert in the fields of physiology and evolution-

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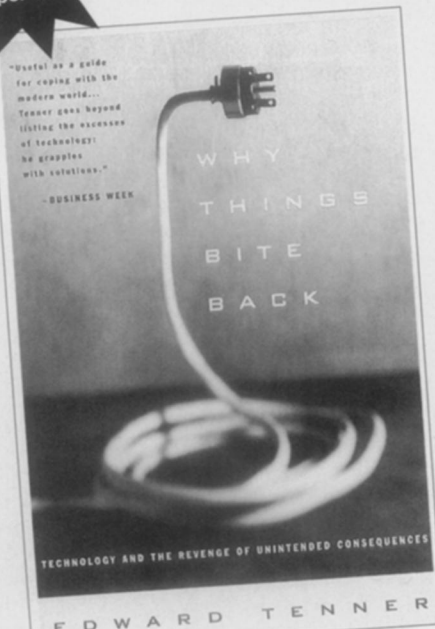
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Edward Tenner is a connoisseur of what he calls "revenge effects"—the unintended, ironic consequences of the mechanical, chemical, biological, and medical forms of ingenuity that have been hallmarks of the progressive, improvement-obsessed 20th century. In seeking out these revenge effects, he ranges far and wide in our cultural landscape to discover an insistent pattern of paradox that implicates everything from black lung to bluebirds, wooden tennis rackets to Windows '95. His insatiable curiosity embraces technology in all its guises: Televised competitive skiing, which is much less exciting now that state-of-the-art cameras have eliminated the blur and lost motion of older broadcasts; low-

tar cigarettes, which may encourage smokers to defer quitting; the meltdown at Chernobyl, which occurred during a test of enhanced safety procedures; and much, much more.

Why Things Bite Back teaches us to revel in our foibles. It is written not for committed technophiles or determined technophobes—though they, too, will find much of interest here—but for innocent laypeople stumbling through a Rube Goldberg world and trying to make sense of it.

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