

This Week

- 180 **Grown-Up Monkey Brains Get Growing**
Bruce Bower
- 180 **Cage provides key to water droplet**
Corinna Wu
- 181 **California's quake deficit fades**
Richard Monastersky
- 181 **Yeast cells point to human cancer gene**
John Travis
- 182 **Red glimmer reveals most distant galaxy**
Mari N. Jensen
- 182 **All age groups lack vitamin D in blood**
Nathan Seppa
- 183 **Harnessing chaos for optical communication**
Ivars Peterson
- 183 **Will petunias and poppies need sunscreen?**
Susan Milius

Articles

- 187 **Drugged Waters**
Does it matter that pharmaceuticals are turning up in water supplies?
Janet Raloff
- 190 **A Model Walker**
Fashioning a Tinkertoy® contraption that walks but can't stand
Ivars Peterson

Letters

Sparing rod doesn't lower crime

The letter from psychologist Ralph S. Welsh identifies exposure to corporal punishment as the cause of high crime rates (SN: 2/7/98, p. 83). This would bewilder many people of my generation (I am 70), for every child we knew was thus forcefully disciplined—the boys more so than the girls, and often continuing into the teens. The phrase was, "He got a real licking!"

Yet our generation was not a crime-ridden one. If it is too simplistic to identify the decline of corporal punishment with rising crime, then it is just as simplistic to maintain that spanking your child leads him into a life of crime.

*Rinehart S. Potts
Glassboro, N.J.*

About faces

I was part of a team from NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC that went to Naj Tunich and photographed the cave and the wall glyphs for later inclusion into their story. In "Sacred

Secrets of the Caves" (SN: 1/24/98, p. 56), the glyph column depicted on page 87 is incorrectly positioned. The faces should be facing left.

*John M. Keshishian
Washington, D.C.*

Quantum sightseeing

"Instant Transport" (SN: 1/17/98, p. 41) gives an excellent explanation of the Einstein-Podolsky-Rosen paradox, which is resolved by two cardinal rules: Anything definite in quantum mechanics is mathematical, and anything physical in quantum mechanics is indefinite.

Since the results of the Innsbruck experiments are completely definite, they are purely mathematical and do not demonstrate any physical effects at all, much less teleportation or instant transport, which, strictly speaking, would be metaphysical.

"Instant transport" reminds me of the old movie title, *If It's Tuesday, This Must Be Belgium*, which implies that its being Tuesday somehow magically transports us to Belgium, whereas in fact the statement refers to

a bus schedule and means merely that there is a sightseeing bus that regularly visits Belgium on Tuesday. Quantum mechanics is as reasonable as a bus schedule, which always includes some rules to clarify it. The two rules here are all the clarification that is needed to separate fact from flapdoodle.

*Kenneth J. Epstein
Chicago, Ill.*

If we are ever to escape the confines of this universe to visit even the nearest star (thousands of light-years away), we must learn somehow to exceed the speed of light in both physical transportation and communications. Teleportation of photons seems to be the first tiny step in that direction.

*L. Wesley Ives
Wilson, N.C.*

Send communications to:

Editor, SCIENCE NEWS
1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
or: scinews@sciserv.org
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Research Notes

- 184 **Biology**
Whales stranded during military test
Eating seeds shifts ant sex ratios
- 185 **Astronomy**
Repulsive force in the cosmos?
Near-Earth asteroid: A far miss
- 186 **Biomedicine**
Short AZT course can protect fetuses
Papillomavirus common in college women
- 186 **Environment**
Self-disinfecting surfaces
When sewage is recycled for drinking

Departments

- 178 **Science News Books**
- 179 **Letters**



Cover: Prescription medicines can be excreted from the body and eventually flushed into public water supplies. Dozens of them have begun turning up in groundwater aquifers, surface waters (like this canal in Berlin), and occasionally tap water. No one knows whether chronic exposure to these chemicals at low concentrations poses a hazard. **Page 187** (Photo: Thomas Heberer)

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