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Letters

Is attention to deficit the disorder?

Instead of trying to change the personalities of ADHD kids ("Kids' attention disorder attracts concern," SN: 11/28/98, p. 343), give them lots of chances to use their energy and urge them to explore and do things differently. Why should obsessive-compulsive autocrats be allowed to try to force everyone into the keyboarding and other routines that hyperactive brains find difficult to handle? We do need people capable of doing more than monotonous work in offices, stores, and factories. I wouldn't trade the varied experiences I've had in my life for any CEO's job.

*Lee Hubbard
Carlsbad, N.M.*

A hidden danger in sex selection

In your interesting article "It's a girl" (SN: 11/28/98, p. 350), the benefit of the technique described for those couples carrying sex-linked genetic disorders is understandable. However, your article does not point out the risks involved. Though only healthy births

have been reported, using a sorting machine that selects sperm with more DNA could cause an unexpected selection of sperm that have a diploid number of chromosomes. This in turn could lead to an increase in the chance of trisomy among the offspring. Selecting for a baby girl (a higher sperm DNA content) may increase the chance of Down's syndrome or Klinefelter's syndrome births, while selecting for a baby boy (a lower sperm DNA content) may increase the chance of a Turner's syndrome child. Sometimes it is better to wait for the sonogram or the birth before you paint the baby's room.

*William B. Crymes Jr.
Columbia, S.C.*

Hygiene concerns

"Meet the superbug" (SN: 12/12/98, p. 376), concerning the radiation-tolerant bacterium *Deinococcus radiodurans*, stops short of addressing a very serious issue. For years now, the food-processing industry has touted irradiation of food as the silver bullet against increasing problems of bacterial contamination in packaged food. Now, here's a

bacterium that can be found in animals' guts, can spoil food, and can tolerate massive radiation. If *D. radiodurans* started finding its way into our food, wouldn't it find irradiated food to be an ideal habitat?

*Dick Dunn
Hygiene, Colo.*

Intercontinental drift

The piece on air-pollution drift across the Pacific Ocean ("Asian pollution drifts over North America," SN: 12/12/98, p. 374) was fascinating and raises several interesting questions about what travels on those winds besides dust and certain metals. What about biological pollution, for example? We know that storm winds were the vectors for the arrival of cattle egrets in the Caribbean and North America from Africa, and there is some evidence of insect, bacterial, and botanical life having gotten to the Caribbean the same way. Is anyone screening the trans-Pacific air currents for such pollutants? They can be quite harmful.

*Thomas F. Norton
Easton, Md.*

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Cover: Novel computer methods used to model complex behavior at interfaces show promise for processing medical images, simulating crystal growth, and determining optimal routes. They can also depict splashing water, as shown here, and other effects on the movie screen. **Page 232** (Image generated by R. Fedkiw and D. Wasson, ©1999 Arete Entertainment, <http://www.areteis.com>)

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