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This Week

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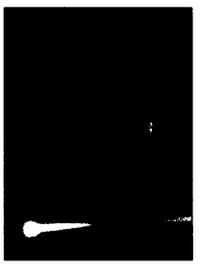

Cover: A trip on the light fantastic. Using the push of sunlight rather than the thrust generated by a massive amount of rocket fuel, a spacecraft may glide through the solar system and into interstellar space in the not-too-distant future. Less ambitious missions, such as a sail-powered satellite to monitor solar storms, are already being planned. **Page 120** (Illustration: JPL/NASA)

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Letters

Another diabetes connection?

The study linking diabetes with infant cows' milk formula ("Cows' milk, diabetes connection bolstered," SN: 6/26/99, p. 404) was intriguing and certainly leads to speculation regarding the addition of bovine growth hormone to our milk supply. The proposed immunologic mechanism for the development of human diabetes after infant exposure to nonpharmacological amounts of bovine insulin could be extended to bovine growth hormone. Everything seems like such a good idea until a mechanism for disaster presents itself.

Warren Geisler
Pelham, N.Y.

I wonder why the research didn't compare at-risk babies who are exclusively breast-fed with babies who receive formula and why the solution seems to be to create a new formula rather than to encourage mothers to breast-feed. If we educate the public about the advantages of breast-feeding, institute policies that support mothers in breast-feeding, and stop normalizing artificial feeding, then perhaps rates of juvenile diabetes and other illnesses will decline.

Janet E. Kruse
Kailua, Hawaii

All the researchers agreed that the benefits of breast-feeding are great and recommended it. However, in this study, they were trying to control as many variables pertaining to cow-protein intake as possible, and so they compared two milk formulas—with and without intact bovine proteins. —N. Seppa

"Humans are the only animals that drink the milk of another species," as stated in the story, is tautologically similar to "If God had meant people to fly, He would have given us wings." True, humans are the only animals that have figured out how to obtain the milk of another species, but after we pour it into their dishes, the other species seldom hesitate. Any role of cows' milk in the etiology of type I diabetes in babies is, as Finnish researcher Hans K. Akerblom observed, offset by the nutritional value of the milk.

Joann S. Grohman
Dixfield, Maine

Stop and go to the obvious

I am distressed to read of complex schemes to simulate traffic conditions ("Stop-and-go science," SN: 7/3/99, p. 8). Dire predictions of total gridlock preceded the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles. The simple expedient of restricting truck traffic in the L.A. basin to the nighttime hours created the lightest daytime traffic that the area has experienced in decades. For 2 weeks, we had clean air and blue skies. Contrast that with conditions in the summers of 1983 and 1985. How about plugging some of those realities into the simulations?

Ted McKinney
Thousand Oaks, Calif.

It never ceases to amaze me how much effort people put into endeavors such as attempting to understand and improve traffic flow while never considering that the problem is actually one of overpopulation. To be truly solved, it requires that we stop growing.

Ted Toal
Nevada City, Calif.