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Letters

Bad MOODS

Just what I need, music that I can't take home to practice and that's covered with someone else's fingerings and bowings ("Managing sweet sounds," SN: 9/25/99, p. 203). And how can I ask the conductor about a particular passage if I can't flip back to find it while he works with another section of the orchestra? Not to mention having "updated music" appear on my stand during the concert! Thank goodness my orchestra is not rich enough to purchase MOODS.

*Amalie Callahan
Rock Island, Ill.*

Chicken praisers

As longtime (and lonely) defenders of chicken intelligence, we have been justified and validated by the findings of Chris and Linda Evans in "Breaking the code on chicken clucks" (SN: 8/28/99, p. 135).

Some years ago, when our flock had free run of the backyard and it was our custom to feed our cats on the back porch, the chickens could distinguish between the food calls we used for chickens and those we used for cats.

When we had chick feed and we called them by "buck, buck, buck," they would show interest. When we called the cats for their food with "brrrr," the chickens were wildly enthusiastic and rushed to the kitchen door. They love canned cat food.

Perhaps it is time to dispel the notion of chickens as "chicken," excessively timid or fearful.

*Paul and Julie Chelminski
Norwalk, Conn.*

I might comment that children are the very best researchers for other-species communication. When my sister and I were small, we had a friend, a hen we called "Dumpy," who ran with wings beating to greet us when we returned from school and escorted us to the

CORRECTIONS

"Plastic plants may become plastics plants" (SN: 10/16/99, p. 246) should have stated that plants thrive on carbon dioxide and sunlight, not carbon monoxide.

In "Well-aged slabs of art" (SN: 10/16/99, p. 254), the cave paintings were dated according to analysis of organic matter buried with them.



Cover: Research with turkeys, sheep, and women with osteoporosis shows that standing for a few minutes a day on a vibrating platform prevents bone loss—apparently by triggering electric currents. It's just one of many therapies under development to harness healing powers of electric and magnetic fields. **Page 316** (Illustration: Kay Salem)

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house, singing all the way. Yes, we sang with her. It meant that she (and we) were happy.

*Louise Ireland-Frey
Durango, Colo.*

Anyone with a small flock of chickens won't be surprised that roosters call hens to food—only that it hadn't been previously documented. My Rhode Island red rooster calls "took, took, took" in varying rhythms and tonal qualities, so I suspect he communicates even more than, "Here's food."

*Edna Weigel
Sierra Vista, Ariz.*

"Breaking the code on chicken clucks" took me back to my boyhood, many years ago, on a farm in Pennsylvania. At that time, each farm had a flock of chickens.

Oftentimes, as the mature flock was foraging, a rooster would vigorously scratch the ground, look intently at the scratched up soil, and in loud, excited tones exclaim, "Took, took, took, took, took." Some hens would come running. Usually, the act was a bluff, and the rooster mounted one of the hens.

*Arthur B. Bush
San Carlos, Calif.*