

Films of The Week

Listing for readers' information of new 16mm and 8mm films on science, engineering, medicine and agriculture for professional, student and general audiences. For further information on purchase, rental or free loan, write to distributor.

FIRE: CONDITIONS FOR COMBUSTION. Series of five films. 8mm (standard or Super-8), color, silent, 2 to 4 min each. Lead to an understanding of the conditions needed for ignition, kindling temperature and a supply of oxygen. Also, how to use these concepts to extinguish fires. Audience: elementary grades. Purchase \$14 per film standard 8mm or \$16 per film Super-8 from Systems for Education, 612 North Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill.

HUMAN AGGRESSION: KEY TO SURVIVAL. 16mm, b&w, sound, 30 min. Filmed interviews with Dr. Konrad Lorenz, who discusses his discovery of the "imprinting" phenomenon, and his concept of "intra-specific aggression," which he relates to the problem of controlling the aggressive instincts in man. Audience: general, biology students, psychology students. Purchase \$125 or rental \$5.40 from NET Film Service, Indiana University, Audio-Visual Center, Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

PATHFINDERS FROM THE STARS. 16mm, color, sound, 48 min. Depicts man's efforts to determine more accurate positions over the earth's surface on land, on sea, and in the air. Traces these efforts from the earliest attempts of the Polynesian islanders' use of bamboo stick charts to the latest technique of geodetic position determination by means of a worldwide network of satellite triangulation stations. Audience: schools, colleges, professional societies, clubs, and service groups. Free loan from Exhibits Section (ESSA), Room 47, Building #2, Washington Science Center, Rockville, Md. 20852.



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LETTERS

To the Editor

Cats that Don't Purr

Sir:

The Nature Note on cats (SN: 7/29) surprised me because it mentions that the big cats do not purr. I have a memory of hearing a leopard purr at the San Diego Zoo.

And now, a few days later, I am reading Helen Martinis' "My Zoo Family" in which she mentions that her lion cubs didn't purr, but her tiger cubs did. Later she mentions the nearly grown tigers as purring, and further on describes full grown leopards as purring. (And she spent much time in close contact with them.)

All this is at odds with the Nature Note. Can we check it out?

Juanita Matassa
Garden Grove, Calif.

(The low "chuffing" or "pleasure sound" of the big cats of the genus Panthera may often be mistaken for a "purr"—but, according to zoologists, it is not technically a purr. Panthers, leopards, lions, tigers, and jaguars have a bone structure in their throats that prevent them from truly purring. They do have a low roar, and a chuffing that occurs at times but is not continuous. Cubs of the big cat family often make a variety of sounds that may sound like the start of a purr.—Ed.)

SST Wright Bros. Style

Sir:

I read two articles in SCIENCE NEWS (SN: 7/29) with more than passing interest.

The first dealt with "SST Design Changes," and the second pertained to sonic booms, titled "Ground Effects May Slow SST."

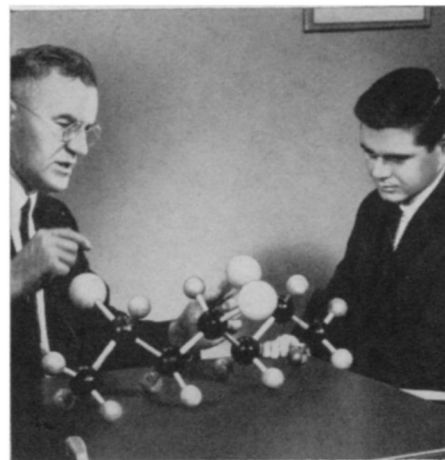
It seems to me that aircraft design engineers are married to the concept that all aircraft must rush along the ground, a la Wright Bros. (1903) style, before flight is possible. Either that, or a Rube Goldberg arrangement of tilting the (Wright Bros. 1903) wing is necessary for VTO.

Nothing about the Boeing Co. SST design is dramatically new, and the canard harks back to Kittyhawk.

To be sure, the variable-sweep wing is a new approach to an old problem, but that problem should have been solved by a VTO design back in 1955.

The "Ground Effects May Slow SST"

(see p. 198)



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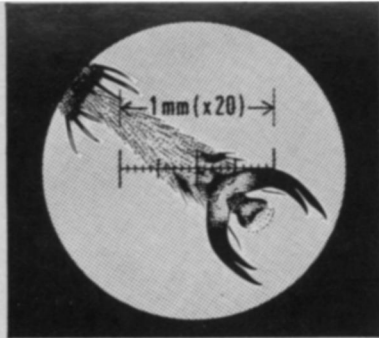
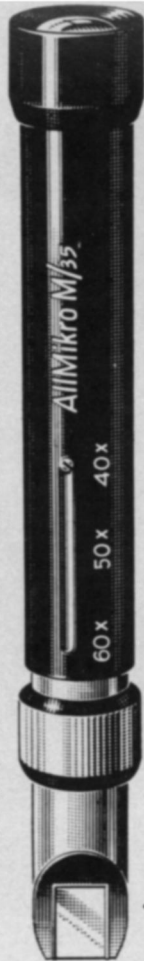
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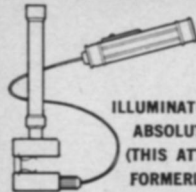
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(Continued from page 195)

article seemed to be the most laughable of the two.

Do you know that in 1964 in Oklahoma, the people were not only bombarded with 6 sonic booms a day, but were also bombarded with Chamber of Commerce—City Council propaganda? The people of Oklahoma were told that the sonic booms were a sign of progress, that more jobs were in the offing, and that Oklahoma would be a massive center of air commerce as a result of (our) endurance.

A group of people petitioned the court for an injunction to halt the booms, but a Federal Court judge refused to hear the case with the comment, "I disagree with you anyway."

The statistics cited in your article which found only 20 to 25 percent of the people objecting to the sonic booms are therefore, unreliable.

Personally I find no analogy or comparison whatsoever between a jet at 1,500 feet after takeoff, and a sonic boom. Please ask Dr. K. D. Kryter if he honestly believes that a jet aircraft approach and fly-over at 1,500 feet is as bad as quietitude disrupted by some donkey whaming the wall under the window by which he is reading?

The astronauts don't cause sonic booms—why not design an SST that will fly at an altitude which eliminates sonic booms?

By the way—who in the world is so important that he must travel from the East Coast to the West Coast (or vice versa) in three hours?

E. L. Crabtree
Midwest City, Okla.

High Regard for Toads

Sir:

I am interested in your alarming article headed, "A Plague of Toads" (SN: 7/8). The article is rather frightening.

As I understand it, this is the same toad that we have in large numbers in Hawaii. It is considered valuable because of its insect-eating propensity. We have, on occasion, gone out with a big cardboard box to gather them up where we can find them to take them back to our yard so it will be well stocked. With thousands of people we share a high regard for them. They are credited with having tremendously reduced the centipede population.

Dogs learn quickly to leave them alone. In 30 years of practicing medicine in Hawaii, I have not heard of injury to a human.

P. H. Liljestrand, M.D.
Leeward Clinic
Aiea, Hawaii

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