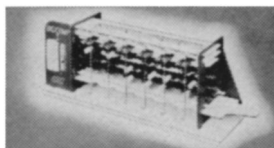


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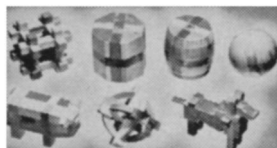
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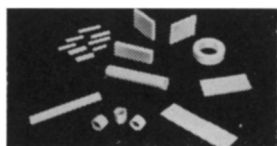
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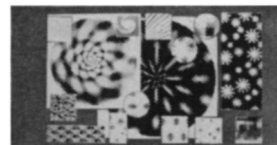
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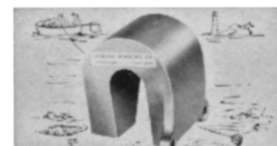
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LETTERS

To the Editor

Abortion

Sir:

In your article concerning the International Conference on Abortion (SN: 9/23), it was stated "Women were obviously clearly underrepresented—but for a reason. Few women hold academic posts in any of the disciplines represented."

In my opinion the persons "clearly underrepresented" were mothers. I believe the right to bear a child or not to bear a child should rest solely with her, the mother.

For anyone who believes in individual rights, this would seem to be the only logical solution to the question of abortion. The embryo is only a parasite in the mother's body. No one can prove otherwise. It affects only the mother's body and life. It should be her choice whether to keep or destroy it. If anyone else makes this decision for her, it is taking away her rights as an individual.

Phyllis Rathbun
Livonia, Mich.

Sonic boom: con

Sir:

As a psychiatrist, I am deeply concerned about the threat to the quality of our daily living implicit in the supersonic transport and the sonic boom that it will generate (SN: 7/29).

We know that the "startle reaction" caused by a sudden loud noise is a convulsion-like response of the newborn infant. The response of older children and adults to a comparable sudden boom has within it the seeds of this convulsive-like response that the small infant exhibits. We know that the startle reaction accelerates the heart beat, raises the blood pressure, dilates the pupils, dries the tongue and mouth, produces sweating of the palms and soles of the feet, in short, produces an alarm reaction to a stimulus which actually contains no threat to survival.

This type of response oft repeated can subject the frail cerebral and coronary vessels of the elderly and the infirm to traumatic shocks of such intensity that they may well die.

The repeated sound shocks on normal people would naturally vary in the type of neurotic response they would eventually produce. Different individuals would react differently to recurrent sound shocks of this intensity. We may be sure, however, that the emotionally unstable and the insane may well react

(see p. 451)

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