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76/science news/vol. 94/27 july 1968

LETTERS

to the editor

Pulsars and print

Sir:

Frankly I like one lesson of the pulsars article (SN:6/8 p. 546), which is that people should not rush into print on hot subjects and publish their results in the newspapers. I have felt for some time that although astronomy is fascinating to the public, it suffers from a great deal of overexposure, especially because of the dramatic new results being obtained. I cannot blame only the scientists involved, since I feel that some overpressure does come from the good science news writers, and possibly even from your type of publication.

My feeling is that science, in fact, is badly in need of good reporting, and should be communicated to the public clearly and fully as possible. However, science does not consist of the dramatic announcement of a discovery, whether the discovery is right or wrong. It is a slow accumulation, and, in fact, its method must be opposite to those that are involved in the search for news. Your last paragraph represents the kind of criticism I would make of the scientists involved, but I do not feel that they are wholly to blame.

Jesse L. Greenstein
 California Institute
 of Technology
 Pasadena

Papago creator

Sir:

In (SN: 5/25, p. 499) you printed an article describing the complex of astronomical instruments on Kitt Peak. This is a nice description of some of the instruments and work done there; however, you fail to resist throwing in some cute statements about the Papago Indians, which aside from being irrelevant are grossly inaccurate. In particular, I

refer to your description of i:t'oi (Ee-ee-toi) as a god of clouds or storms. I:t'oi is the Papago creator spirit and not a god in our sense of the word, and he most certainly is not some Indian transform of Thor or Jupiter.

William W. Pilcher
 Department of Anthropology
 University of Illinois,
 Urbana

An accurate picture

Sir:

It was with great interest that I read your article (SN: 6/8, p. 555), describing our research on the responsiveness to cognitive demands of three-year-old, middle-class and Puerto Rican children. My colleagues and I agree that the article presented an accurate picture of our research design and findings.

Margaret E. Hertzog, M.D.
 N.Y. University
 Medical Center
 New York

I.Q. and the spark

Sir:

Referring to your article (SN: 5/18, p. 479), "Creativity: Testing for the Spark":

I have worked with high school students in their pursuit and preparation of science projects for quite a number of years. From experience, I couldn't agree more with the factors you stated in the article for determining creativity and predicting success. I have found that a minimum I.Q. was essential but it was really these factors of persistence, independence and originality that were evident in the students who went on to win awards, who were really successful in college and in a scientific career after college.

(See Letters, p. 78)

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