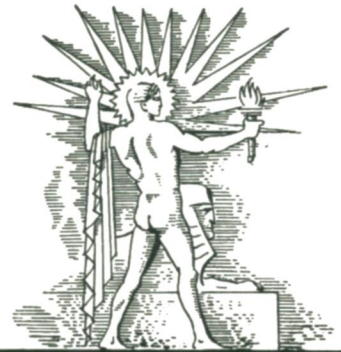


PRICE  
15¢

# SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

THE WEEKLY SUMMARY OF CURRENT SCIENCE •



January 28, 1939

**Fabulous But Real**

See Page 57

A S C I E N C E S E R V I C E P U B L I C A T I O N

## Do You Know?

When fleece is shorn off a sheep, 30 to 70 per cent. of the weight is foreign matter.

Green outer leaves of lettuce contain 30 times as much vitamin A as the white inner leaves.

A pygmy sperm whale only eight feet long has been sent to the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia.

A simple chemical method for testing ripeness of grapes is being sought by New York State agricultural chemists.

Cornell University holds a four-day course every January for florists who want to keep up with new flowers and trade problems.

Algebraic words have been found in Babylonian records, and the name algebra itself is believed by some scholars to come from a Babylonian term for equation.

The population of the continental United States increased seven-tenths of one per cent. in the past year, according to the estimate of 130,215,000 people as of July 1, 1938.

Lake Dwellings built in the New Stone Age in Europe were not set on piles over the water, as was once supposed; instead, they were built over dry land at the edge of lakes, and were set high for protection from floods and dampness.

## QUESTIONS DISCUSSED IN THIS ISSUE

Most articles which appear in SCIENCE NEWS LETTER are based on communications to Science Service, or on papers before meetings. Where published sources are used they are referred to in the article.

### AGRICULTURE

How were most crop improvements effected? p. 53.

### ANTHROPOLOGY

What is the Tena Indian word for Friday? p. 52.

How are the recently found African skulls like those of Java ape-man? p. 54.

### ASTRONOMY

In what way does the calculated curvature of space fail to fit its contents? p. 55.

Where did the star Algol get its name? p. 58.

### BOTANY

How did potatoes get to Virginia? p. 57.

Where did poinsettias come from? p. 63.

### CHEMISTRY

What is phosgene made of? p. 60.

### CONSERVATION

How can picnickers be taught greater care with fires? p. 52.

### ENGINEERING

What did a good car cost in 1925? p. 60.

### ENGINEERING—PSYCHOLOGY

What is "see-level"? p. 62.

### ETHNOLOGY

What did 16th-century China know of Mexico? p. 54.

### GENERAL SCIENCE

Are facts ever taboo in science? p. 56.

### GEOLOGY

Where are engineers having trouble with the Ice Age? p. 55.

### MATHEMATICS

What are "branch points"? p. 63.

### MEDICINE

What is the "blood-brain barrier"? p. 51.

What are the symptoms of true influenza? p. 52.

### METALLURGY

What is going to cause a boom in magnesium? p. 56.

### METEOROLOGY

What is a radiosonde? p. 56.

### MINING

Where can safety be had in bags? p. 62.

### PALEONTOLOGY

When did the dodo become extinct? p. 57.

### PHYSICS

How can magnetism be used in traffic control? p. 54.

What are Cerenkov rays? p. 59.

How high a vacuum can now be created? p. 61.

### POPULATION

What percentage of the U. S. population is Negro? p. 56.

### PSYCHIATRY

Who is seeking causes for nervous breakdown? p. 62.

### PSYCHOLOGY

What does mannose taste like? p. 51.

Are averages always useful? p. 57.

### PUBLIC HEALTH

Was 1938 a good year for babies? p. 53.

Where have men suffered to make themselves beautiful? p. 61.

### SEISMOLOGY

What has the moon to do with earthquakes? p. 57.

A Soviet salvaging expedition which recently hauled up a steamer sunk in the Black Sea in 1920 found the ship sunk into the sea bottom 16 feet deep.

The streets where Jesus walked when in Jerusalem are now many feet below the present surface, explains Prof. Millar Burrows of Yale.

## SCIENCE NEWS LETTER

Vol. 35 JANUARY 28, 1939 No. 4

The Weekly Summary of Current Science, published every Saturday by SCIENCE SERVICE, Inc., 2101 Constitution Avenue, Washington, D. C. Edited by WATSON DAVIS.

Subscriptions—\$5.00 a year; two years \$7.00; 15 cents a copy. Ten or more copies to same address, 5 cents a copy. Back numbers more than six months old, 25 cents.

Members of the American Association for the Advancement of Science have privilege of subscribing to SCIENCE NEWS LETTER at the reduced price of \$3 per year. Applications for this privilege should be accompanied by privilege card obtained from the Permanent Secretary, A.A.A.S., Smithsonian Institution Building, Washington, D. C.

In requesting change of address, please give your old address as well as the new one, at least two weeks before change is to become effective.

Copyright, 1939, by Science Service, Inc. Reproduction of any portion of SCIENCE NEWS LETTER is strictly prohibited. Newspapers, maga-

zines and other publications are invited to avail themselves of the numerous syndicate services issued by Science Service.

Cable address: Scienservc, Washington.

Entered as second class matter at the post-office at Washington, D. C., under the act of March 3, 1879. Established in mimeographed form March 18, 1922. Title registered as trademark. U. S. and Canadian Patent Offices. Indexed in Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature and in the Engineering Index.

Advertising rates on application. Member Audit Bureau of Circulation.

SCIENCE SERVICE is the Institution for the Popularization of Science organized 1921 as a non-profit corporation, with trustees nominated by the National Academy of Sciences, the National Research Council, the American Association for the Advancement of Science, the E. W. Scripps Estate and the journalistic profession.

Board of Trustees—Honorary President: William E. Ritter, University of California. Representing the American Association for the Advancement of Science, J. McKeen Cattell, Editor, Science, Garrison, N. Y.; Henry B. Ward, University of Illinois, Urbana, Ill.; Edwin G. Conklin, President, American Philosophical Society, Philadelphia, Pa. Representing the National

Academy of Sciences, W. H. Howell, Vice-President and Chairman of Executive Committee, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, Md.; R. A. Millikan, Director, Norman Bridge Laboratory of Physics, California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, Calif.; Harlow Shapley, Director, Harvard College Observatory, Cambridge, Mass. Representing National Research Council, C. G. Abbot, Secretary, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D. C.; Harrison E. Howe, Editor of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, Washington, D. C.; Ross G. Harrison, Director, Osborn Zoological Laboratory, Yale University, New Haven, Conn. Representing Journalistic Profession, John H. Finley, Editor, New York Times; J. Edwin Murphy, Managing Editor, Baltimore Evening Sun, Baltimore, Md.; O. W. Riegel, Director, Lee School of Journalism, Washington and Lee University, Lexington, Va. Representing E. W. Scripps Estate, Harry L. Smithton, Treasurer, Cincinnati, Ohio; Warren S. Thompson, Miami University, Oxford, Ohio.

Staff—Director, Watson Davis; Writers, Frank Thone, Emily C. Davis, Jane Stafford, Marjorie Van de Water, Robert Potter, Leonard H. Engel; Correspondents in principal cities and centers of research. Photography: Fremont Davis; Librarian: Minna Gill; Sales and Advertising: Hallie Jenkins, Austin Winant, Howard Bandy.