priorities that gave ascendancy to the seeking of global preeminence over improving the quality of our national life, that these same priorities led to our intervention in Vietnam, and that they are likely to lead to further such interventions, which "seem to undermine the way of life they seek to preserve and spread" (pp. 168–69).

Blankenship would like to use the Apollo decision as an index of the quality of our political decision-making and wants to blame the decision-makers for our not doing better things. He asks, "Why have we had an Apollo but not, for example, a decent health care or welfare system?"—implying that this is part of "a set of questions different from those posed by the author." But I believe my book faces this question squarely. We went to the moon because the values held by the majority of the American people and their leaders in 1961 found Project Apollo congenial. We do not have a decent health care or welfare system because neither in 1961 nor now is there sufficient support in the American polity to accomplish those goals. Thus, if the Apollo decision is an index of anything, it is an index of the values we as a people held in 1961. Blankenship dissents from these values, and so do I. But it is he, not I, who confuses a description of what was with one of what should have been.

JOHN M. LOGSDON
Program of Policy Studies in Science and Technology, George Washington University, Washington, D.C. 20006

Quality Control

Because of its tremendous importance and the real danger of its quietly falling by the wayside, the peer review system so ably defended by Gross (Letters, 9 July) deserves additional and continued support from concerned scientists.

The biological scientific research community, as well as officials of such federal agencies as the National Institutes of Health and the National Science Foundation, has on numerous occasions in the past praised the peer review system as the fairest way to maintain "quality control" over proposed projects, a control doubly necessary in these times of decreased funding of basic research. Scientific merit must remain the sole basis for award of the meager monies available; and the "relevancy" fad folk must realize that, as Gross also argues, true relevance and "applicableness" will, in the long run, derive far more often from the tackling of well-chosen basic problems than from "direct" approaches when the latter are of a superficial nature or of low scientific merit.

Administrators long out of personal research activity, no matter how well meaning, are seldom as appropriate judges of the quality of a specialized project as are pertinent panels of the principal investigator's peers in that particular field of research.

JOHN O. CORLISS
Department of Zoology, University of Maryland, College Park 20742

Injustice to Women Scientists

Our society is overgrown with trivial hindrances to the advancement of women. This is so much a part of our culture that we are scarcely aware of it. Most of these minor injustices would have no effect at all by themselves, but in the aggregate their impact is enormous. They add up to a widespread, low-key slighting of women, a refusal to be aware of what women can do and and are doing. This affects hiring practices quite directly. More important, it diminishes the aspirations of young women and thus compounds the problem. Therefore it is important to call attention to these offenses and to consider their effects.

One such affront to women is the title of the widely used reference work, *American Men of Science*. It offends women scientists, whose biographies are included in the volume but whose existence is explicitly denied in the title. Furthermore, the name suggests at a glance that scientists are men. Since these prestigious volumes are used not only by members of the scientific community but also by students, reporters, and so forth, and are visible in libraries everywhere, this pernicious suggestion reaches many minds.

Like many other disparagements of women, this one was inadvertent. No malice was intended. In 1906, when publication of *American Men of Science* began, the title may well have been appropriate. This is no longer the case.

DORA B. GOLDSTEIN
Department of Pharmacology, Stanford University, Stanford, California 94305