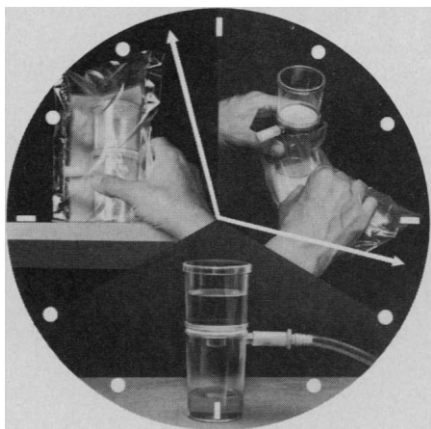


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LETTERS

Support for Big Thicket

The excellent editorial (9 Feb., p. 525) by Thomas Eisner concerning the prospects for a Big Thicket National Park was encouraging to those of us who have been fighting for the park for many years. However, I was distressed by the pessimistic tone of the editor's note.

More people are working for Big Thicket in Texas today than ever before, and new organizations are springing up all over the state in its support. Whole high school classes have been organized for it, and a group of teachers of science in the universities of five southwestern states was formed in January to actively work to support the creation of this park.

There has been some disagreement over the size and nature of the park. Indeed, enemies of the Big Thicket have used this to try and destroy any chance at all for its creation.

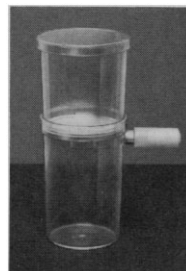
When I was in the Senate, we passed in 1970 a Big Thicket National Park Bill, inadequate though it was, based on a bill which I had been introducing and working for since 1966. Two hearings have been held on this bill in Texas, one by the Senate and one by the House, in the past 3½ years. New forces are gathering to support it.

Whether we are able to save the Big Thicket or not (and there's a real chance now that we can), at least the journal of the AAAS should be strongly on the side of justice and conservation, and not giving encouragement to the "Too late, it can't be done, it's gone, it's destroyed" opponents. No one is giving up the fight for Big Thicket here, and the more voices raised in support of the park, the sooner it will become a reality.

RALPH W. YARBOROUGH
721 Brown Building,
Austin, Texas 78701

Galápagos Graffiti

In all national parks, besides being an obvious duty of every civilized human being, it is prohibited to destroy or remove anything. This includes painting one's initials on the landscape. In Tagus Cove, in the Galápagos Islands, it has been traditional since the time of buccaneers and whalers for the crews



of visiting ships to write their names on the precipitous rock walls. Although the Galápagos Islands are now a national park, this custom regrettably has been continued. It is bad enough when proprietors of private boats do not know how to behave and unscrupulously ignore the laws of the national park. However, it is especially bitter when this type of vandalism (see above photograph) is done by the crew of the American research vessel *Searcher*, who were doing scientific research at the Galápagos National Park during the summer of 1972.

B. GRZIMEK
*Zoological Society of 1858,
Alfred-Brehm-Platz,
6 Frankfurt am Main 1,
Germany*

Artifact or Artefact?

The plea of W. N. Irving (not Irving?) that artifact should be spelled with an "e" because this would have been the Latin spelling had the word been current when Latin was (Letters, 18 May, p. 696) reminds me of a sign I saw some years ago on a watering trough in West Fort Anne, New York. The sign said, "This is where Paul Revere would have watered his horse had he come this way."

ARTHUR E. NEWKIRK
*Research and Development Center,
General Electric Company,
Schenectady, New York 12301*

I would like to know W. N. Irving's justification for the statement that "this

[artefact] would have been the spelling in Latin had the word been current when Latin was." If the stem word had been an ordinary third-declension noun, I would not argue with him; but in fact it is one of a special class known as "i-stem" nouns, in which the persistence of the "i" is reflected in certain inflectional forms. One need only look at the actual Latin word *artifex* (and its derivative, *artificium*) to see counter-examples of his argument. I strongly urge him to persuade the Society for American Archaeology to mend the error of their ways.

GEORGE L. TRIGG
Brookhaven National Laboratory,
Upton, Long Island, New York 11973

ERTS Imagery

In his second report on the Earth Resources Technology Satellite (ERTS) program (Research News, 13 Apr., p. 171), Thomas H. Maugh II refers to a study of vegetation and geology of the western Seward Peninsula, Alaska, conducted by L. Shapiro, A. E. Belon and myself. Although a paper (1) is in press and a detailed technical report (2) is available, certain aspects of this study should be made clear at this time.

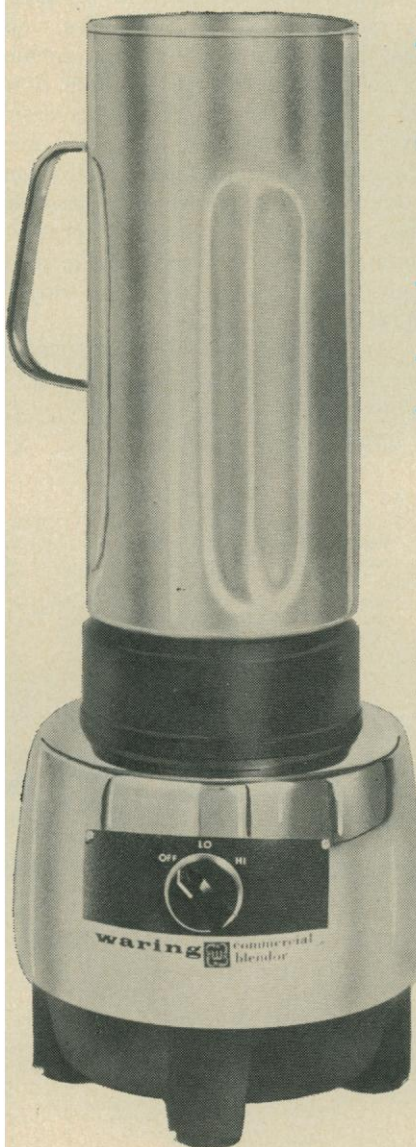
1) The study was intended primarily as an exercise. We only wanted to find out how much information could be derived from the scene, one of the first good ones of Alaska, by direct visual examination, with a minimum of ground data. We had little image interpretation equipment and little ground data on vegetation available at the time. Therefore the vegetation interpretations (1, 2) and the map are subject to revision.

2) The caption for figure 1 indicates that seven distinct vegetation types are shown on the map prepared from the ERTS image. Actually, only five types are shown. Senescent vegetation is not a type, but a phenological phase of certain types, and the term "fire scars" designates areas where the vegetation is in some unspecified post-fire state and has not been distinguished according to type.

3) The caption for figure 1 seems to imply that the earlier vegetation map used for comparison (3) has been superseded by a better map. Actually, the existing map served as ground data for the new map. The latter shows

surprising

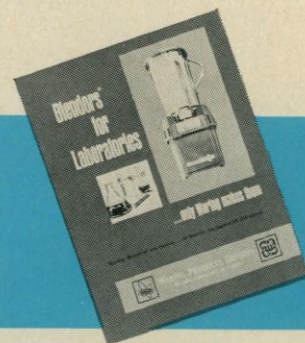
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