

## LETTERS

### Appointments to Working Government Councils

In December 1972, Frank Sinatra was appointed a member of the National Advisory Heart and Lung Council, to fill a 1-year unexpired term. This council, by law, consists of 5 ex officio members and 18 members appointed by the secretary of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW). The National Heart, Blood Vessel, Lung and Blood Act of 1972 states that 5 of the 18 "shall be selected from members of the general public who are leaders in the fields of fundamental or medical sciences or in public affairs." Neither I nor any other council member questions the principle of appointing nonscientists to the council, or the wisdom shown by the secretary of HEW in the appointment of any individual. However, the scientists on the council do have a right to expect full participation of all members in the heavy work load of the council, and to expect that the nonscientists will bring new concepts and fresh points of view to the council's discussions—and express these effectively. The council must meet from

four to six times a year, and members must spend much time between meetings on the council's business.

Mr. Sinatra accepted appointment to the council but did not attend even part of the four council meetings held since then (15 to 17 March, 29 and 30 March, 13 to 15 June, and 17 and 18 September), nor did he contribute to the council's work between meetings. Since his term has now expired, why bring the matter to public attention? Simply in the hope that the public may ask the secretary of HEW that there be no more honorary or courtesy appointments to working councils whose responsibilities require the dedicated efforts of all its members. Surely the government can find ways to honor those whose special talents or contributions deserve recognition without lessening the effectiveness and prestige of its working councils.

JULIUS H. COMROE, JR.  
*Cardiovascular Research Institute,  
School of Medicine, University of  
California, San Francisco 94122*

### The Albatross Award

In the cover story (News and Comment, 7 Sept., p. 926) on giving the bird to Roger Revelle, Robert Gillette approaches, but doesn't quite manage, Coleridge's

Instead of the cross, the Albatross  
About my neck was hung.

An ancient Oceanographer, wishing to be rid of "that damned dusty creature" and its attendant drought, might shift from "slimy things did crawl with legs upon a slimy sea" to blessing the water snakes:

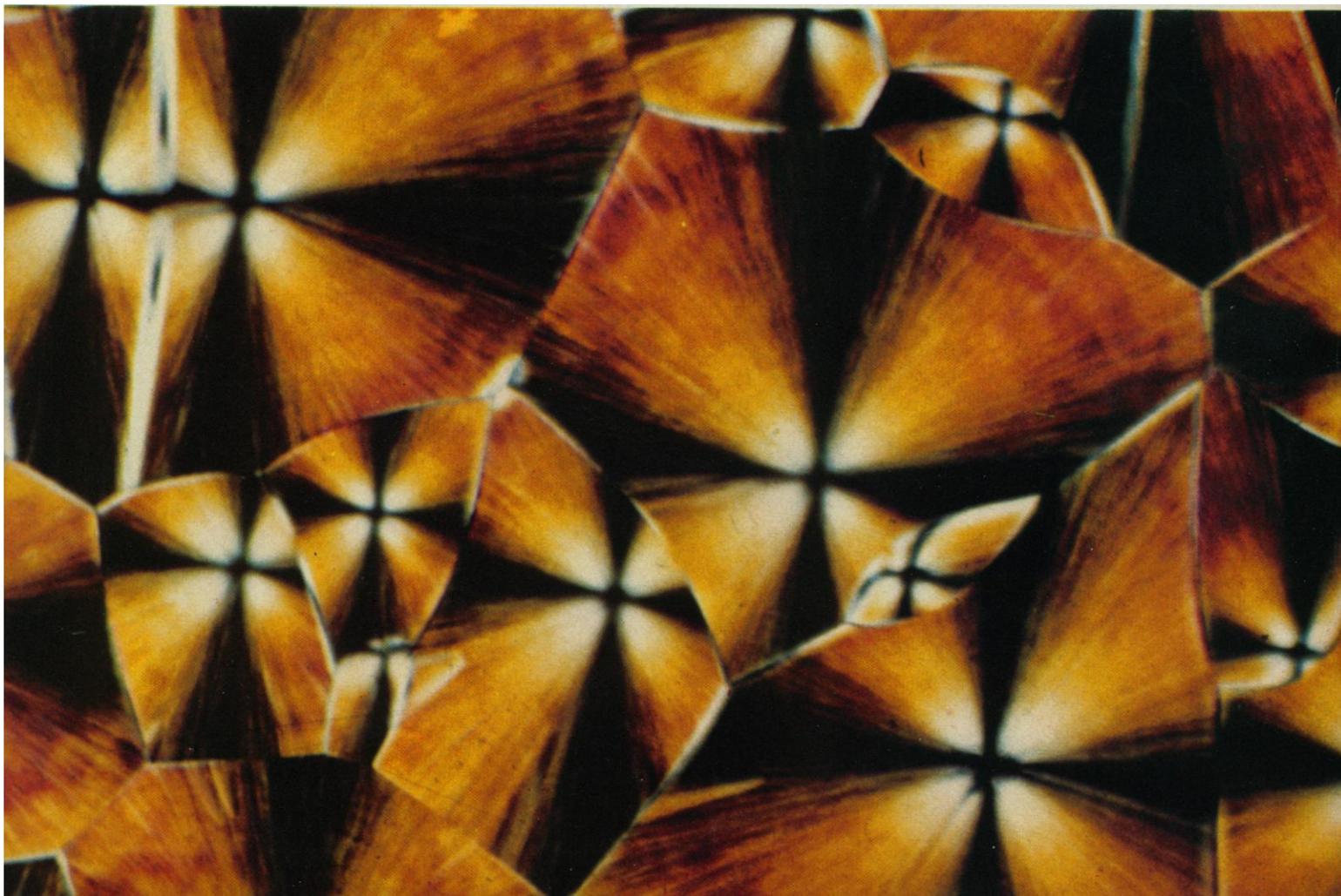
O happy living things! no tongue  
Their beauty might declare.

For that inward grace no award is  
needed.

Who killed *this* albatross?

ROLAND WALKER  
*Department of Biology,  
Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute,  
Troy, New York 12181*

The story on the Albatross award, would-be Nobelists, and AMSOC (American Miscellaneous Society) reminds me of our own system of



awards. When we moved into our three-story laboratory, we inherited a modern communications system—a pull cord attached to a bell which could be heard at all three levels. We now use it for ingenious approaches to the solution of problems, and, as yet, no one has achieved the ultimate—the five-bell award. However, when an original stupidity is perpetrated, we issue the no-bell award.

J. J. MARCUS

Missouri Analytical Laboratories, Inc.,  
1820 Delmar Boulevard, St. Louis

### Knowledge Factory

The following excerpt from Sinclair Lewis's novel *Arrowsmith* (1) is an interesting addition to Harold L. Enarson's editorial "University or knowledge factory?" (7 Sept., p. 897).

The University of Winnemac is at Mohalis, fifteen miles from Zenith. There are twelve thousand students; beside this prodigy Oxford is a tiny theological school and Harvard a select college for young gentlemen. The University has a baseball field under glass; its buildings are measured by the mile; it hires hundreds

of young Doctors of Philosophy to give rapid instruction in Sanskrit, navigation, accountancy, spectacle-fitting, sanitary engineering, Provençal poetry, tariff schedules, rutabaga-growing, motor-car designing, the history of Voronezh, the style of Matthew Arnold, the diagnosis of myohypertrophia kymoparalytica, and department-store advertising. Its president is the best moneyraiser and the best after-dinner speaker in the United States; and Winnemac was the first school in the world to conduct its extension courses by radio.

It is not a snobbish rich-man's college, devoted to leisurely nonsense. It is the property of the people of the state, and what they want—or what they are told they want—is a mill to turn out men and women who will lead moral lives, play bridge, mention books, though they are not expected to have time to read them. It is a Ford Motor Factory, and if its products rattle, they are beautifully standardized, with perfectly interchangeable parts. Hourly the University of Winnemac grows in numbers and influence, and by 1950 one may expect it to have created an entirely new world-civilization, a civilization larger and brisker and purer.

DEAN TROYER

440 North Winona Street,  
Indianapolis, Indiana 46202

#### References

1. S. Lewis, *Arrowsmith* (Harcourt Brace, New York, 1949), chap. 2, sect. 1.

### Marital Status and Mobility

Beverley R. Green (Letters, 10 Aug. p. 496) reports that only 5 percent of the applicants for a biochemistry position and 3 percent of the applicants for a botany position at the University of British Columbia were women. She implies that, since between 10 and 20 percent of those receiving Ph.D.'s in these fields are women, women are giving up without trying; that women make up a small proportion of faculty because they do not apply for jobs; and that men cannot be blamed for this.

We analyzed the applications received for five positions in the department of biology at Michigan Technological University as a result of an advertisement in the 2 March issue of *Science*. We found that the percentages of women applicants compared well with the percentages reported by Green. However, our interpretation of these results is quite different from Green's.

In addition to classifying applicants according to sex, we also noted marital status. We found that more than 90 percent of the male applicants were married, while all but one (93 percent) of the female applicants were single.

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