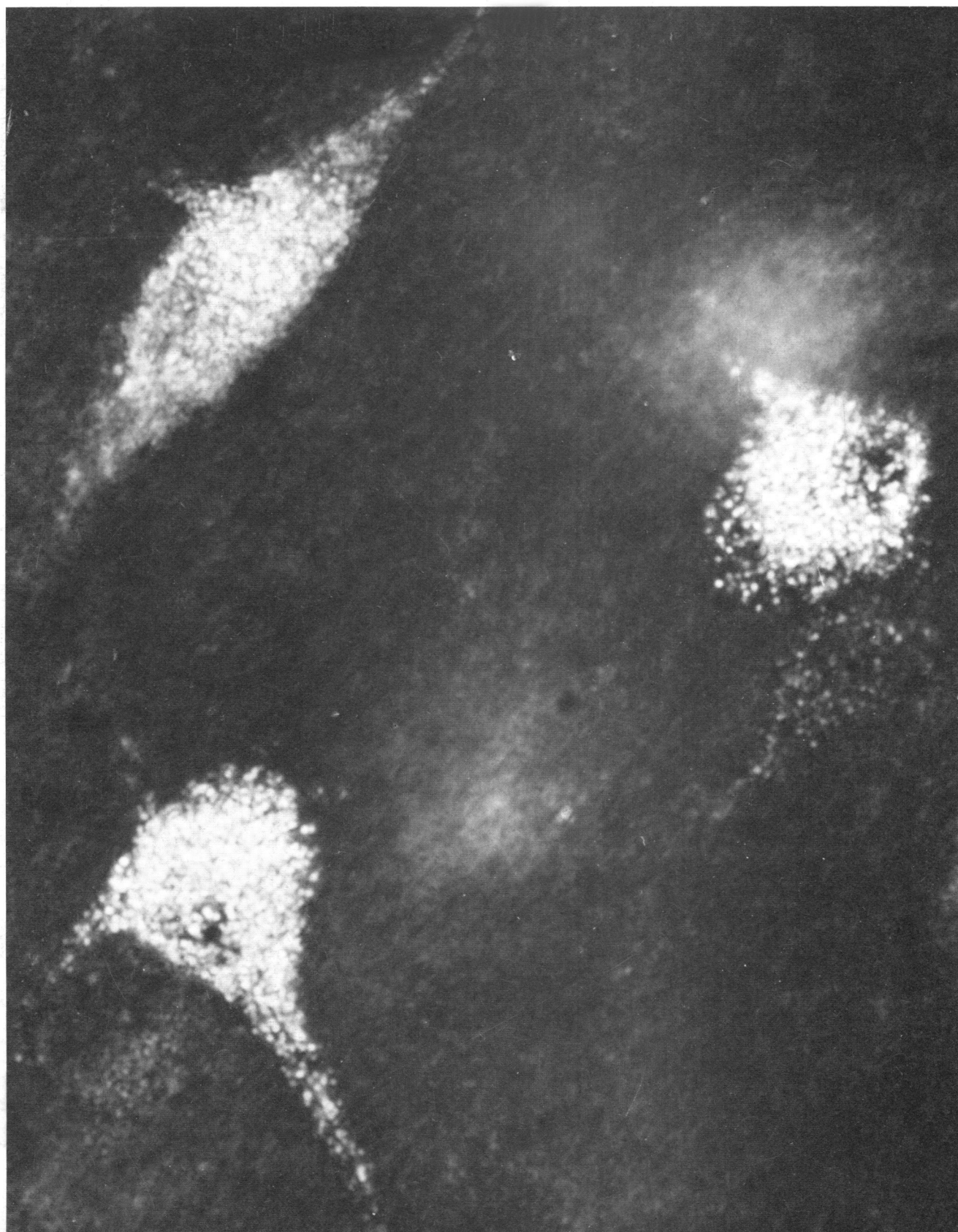


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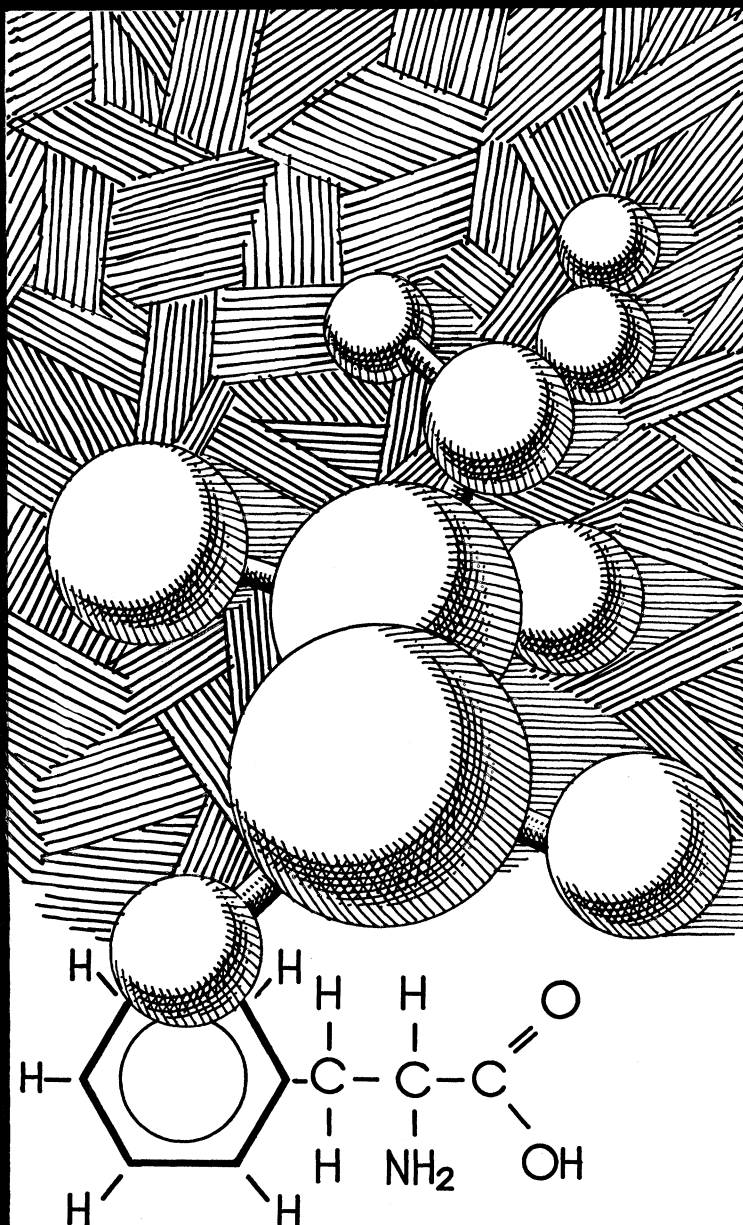
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Volume 187, No. 4177

SCIENCE

LETTERS	Long Experience: <i>E. L. Butz</i> ; SI Units and Thermal Energy: <i>R. D. Freeman</i> ; <i>C. H. Page</i> ; <i>R. J. Temple</i> ; Water on Venus and Mars: <i>H. J. Smith</i> ; The Demise of the Ne'anderthels: Wes Lengege e Fecter? <i>J. H. Fremlen</i> ; <i>M. L. Wolbarsht</i> ; Delaney Clause for Birth Defects: <i>E. B. Hook</i> 598
EDITORIAL	Support for Reviews and Data Evaluation: <i>L. M. Branscomb</i> 603
ARTICLES	Of Atoms, Mountains, and Stars: A Study in Qualitative Physics: <i>V. F. Weisskopf</i> 605
	Metabolic Consequences of Diving in Animals and Man: <i>P. W. Hochachka</i> and <i>K. B. Storey</i> 613
	Foreign Technology and the United States Economy: <i>S. Gee</i> 622
NEWS AND COMMENT	Strategic Arms Limitation (II): "Leveling Up" to Symmetry 627
	Biomedical Research Panel Named 629
	Pilots Take Unilateral Action on Flying Hazardous Cargo 630
	Energy R & D: New Jurisdiction for Reorganized House Committee 632
RESEARCH NEWS	Vitamin D: Investigations of a New Steroid Hormone 635
BOOK REVIEWS	Youth: Transition to Adulthood and School Review, reviewed by <i>J. A. Clausen</i> ; The Cell Surface in Development, <i>E. J. McGuire</i> ; Claude Bernard and Animal Chemistry, <i>G. L. Geison</i> ; The Control of Gene Expression in Animal Development, <i>H. F. Lodish</i> ; Energy and Charge Transfer in Organic Semiconductors, <i>G. A. Thomas</i> ; Books Received 637

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REPORTS	Isotope Separation in a "Seeded Beam": <i>J. B. Anderson and P. Davidovits</i>	642
	Energy Conservation Policies of the Federal Energy Office: Economic Demand Analysis: <i>T. A. Ferrar and J. P. Nelson</i>	644
	Agglomeration of Ash in Fluidized Beds Gasifying Coal: The Godel Phenomenon: <i>J. Yerushalmi et al.</i>	646
	Maternal Malnutrition and Placental Transfer of α -Aminoisobutyric Acid in the Rat: <i>P. Rosso</i>	648
	Ornithine Decarboxylase Activity: Control by Cyclic Nucleotides: <i>C. V. Byus and D. H. Russell</i>	650
	Mezerein: Antileukemic Principle Isolated from <i>Daphne mezereum</i> L.: <i>S. M. Kupchan and R. L. Baxter</i>	652
	Gene Transfer to a Myxobacterium by <i>Escherichia coli</i> Phage P1: <i>D. Kaiser and M. Dworkin</i>	653
	Concanavalin A: Its Action in Inducing Oocyte Maturation-Inducing Substance in Starfish Follicle Cells: <i>J. Kubota and H. Kanatani</i>	654
	Transmissible Mink Encephalopathy: Infectivity of Corneal Epithelium: <i>R. F. Marsh and R. P. Hanson</i>	656
	Water Recycling in Lactation: <i>P. Baverstock and B. Green</i>	657
	Stroke in Rats Produced by Carotid Injection of Sodium Arachidonate: <i>T. W. Furlow, Jr., and N. H. Bass</i>	658
	Basal Forebrain and Hypothalamic Connections to Frontal and Parietal Cortex in the Rhesus Monkey: <i>J. Kievit and H. G. J. M. Kuypers</i>	660
	Symbolic Matching by Pigeons: Rate of Learning Complex Discriminations Predicted from Simple Discriminations: <i>D. E. Carter and D. A. Eckerman</i>	662
	Sexual Selection in a Wild Population of the Butterfly <i>Danaus chrysippus</i> L.: <i>D. A. S. Smith</i>	664

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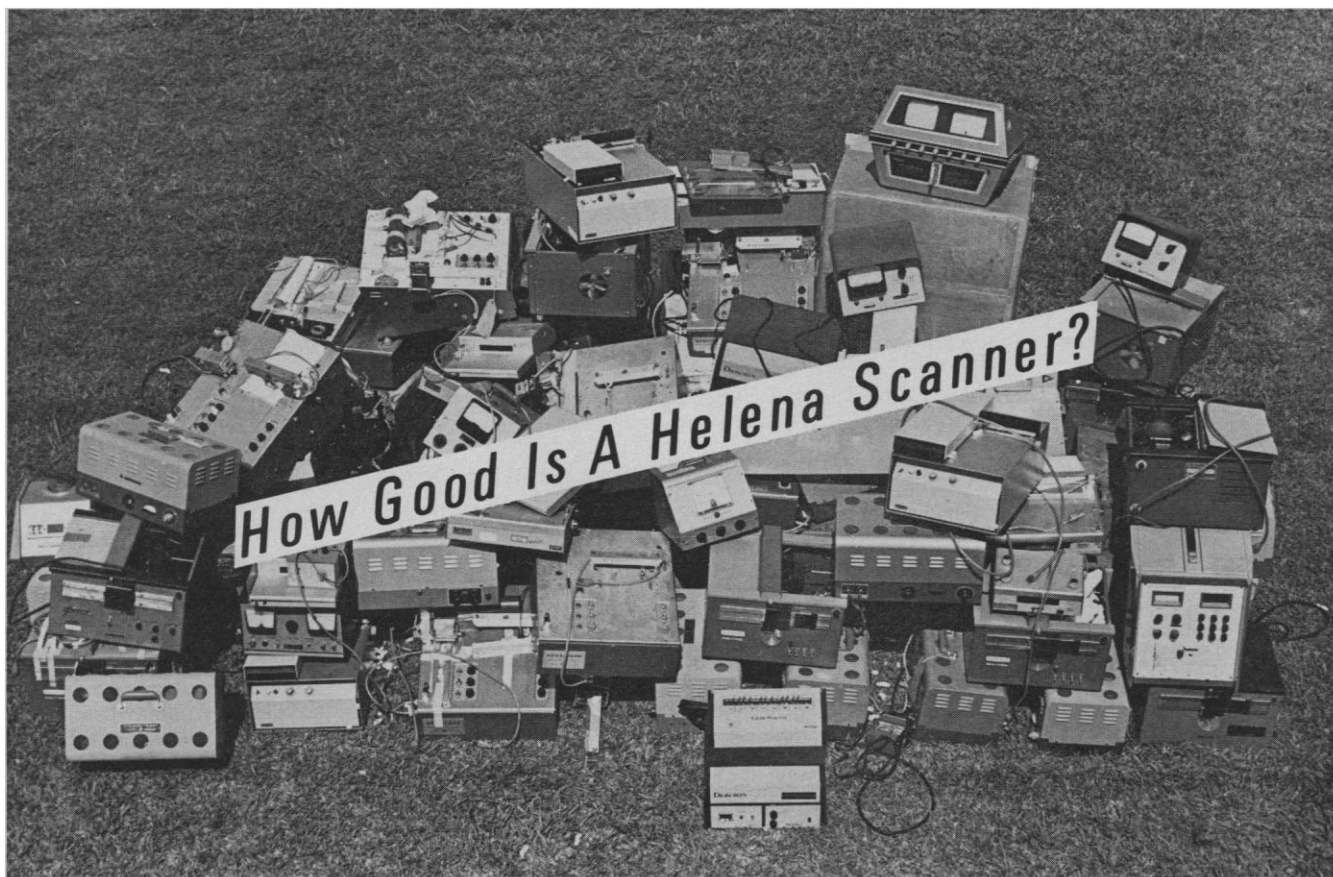
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COVER

Dark-field photomicrograph of neurons, filled with horseradish peroxidase reaction granules in the basal forebrain area of the rhesus monkey. The enzyme, which is transported retrogradely through axons, appeared in these cell bodies after injection in the precentral gyrus. See page 660. [W. van den Oudenalder, Erasmus University Medical School, Rotterdam, Netherlands]

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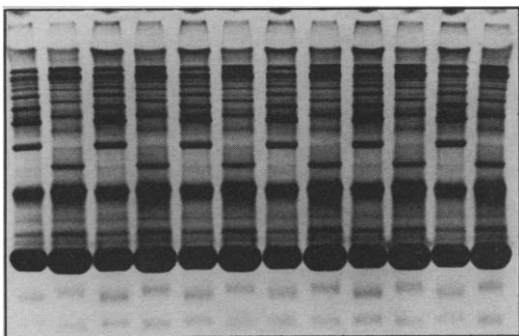
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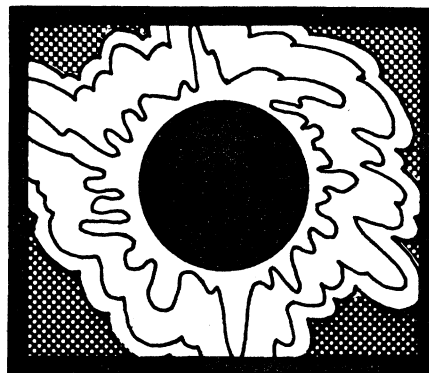
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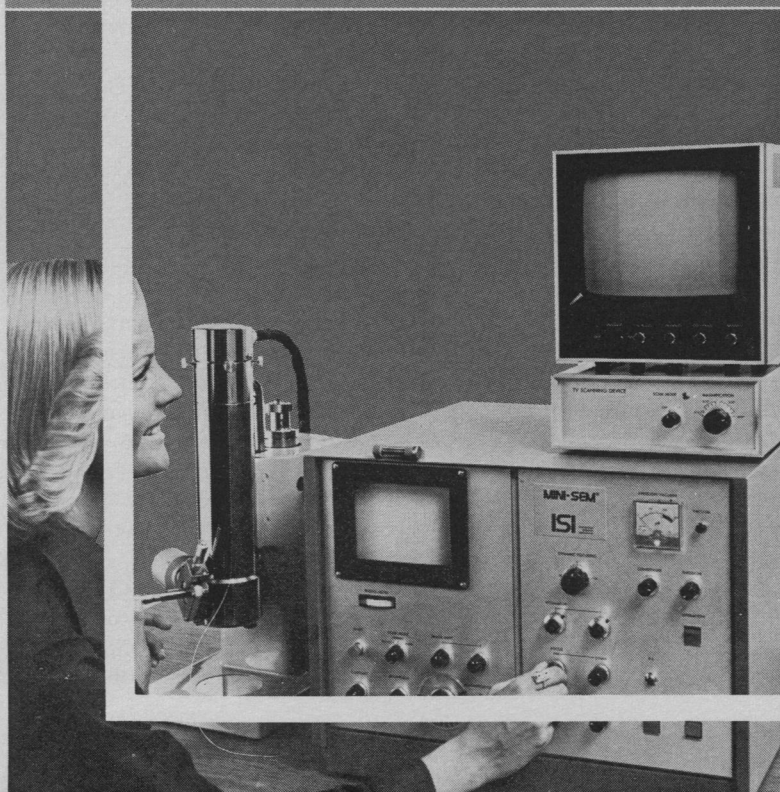


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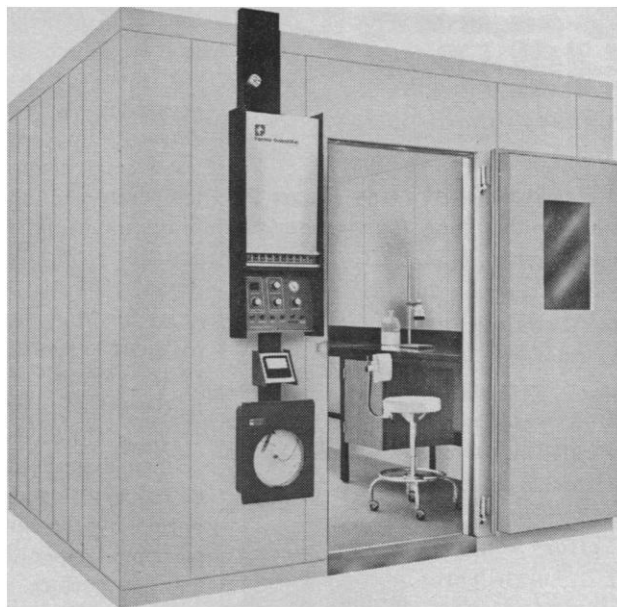
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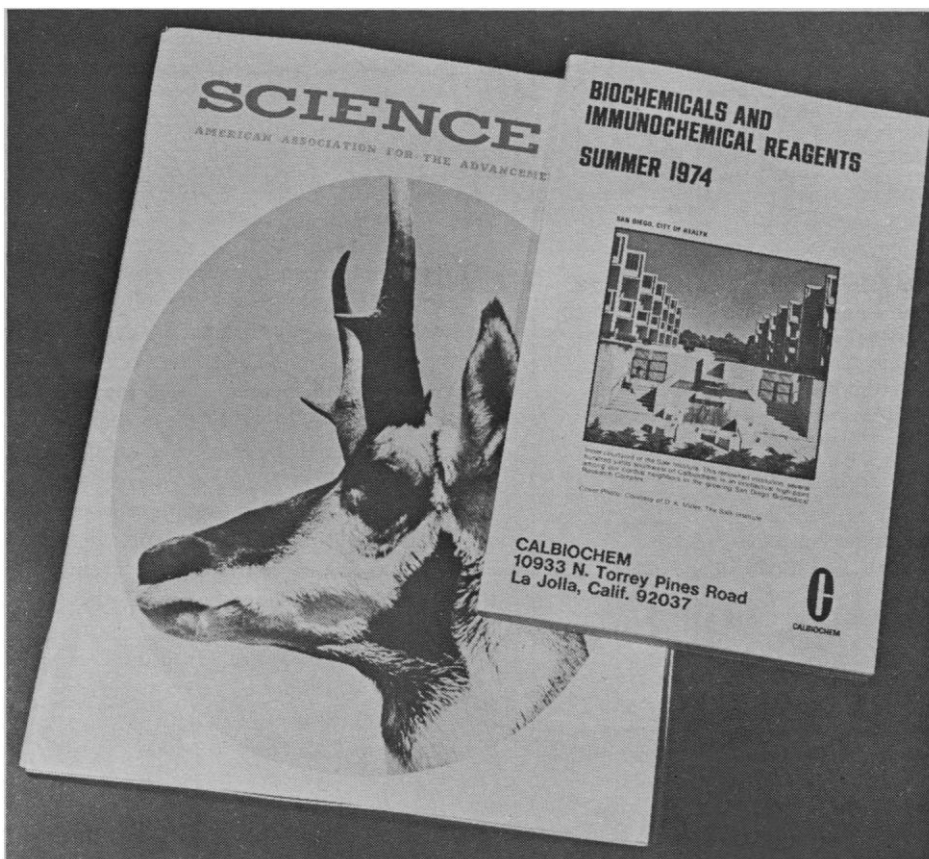
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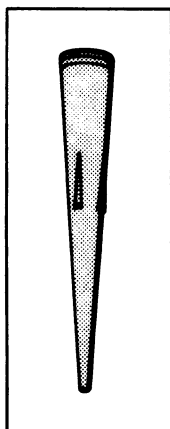
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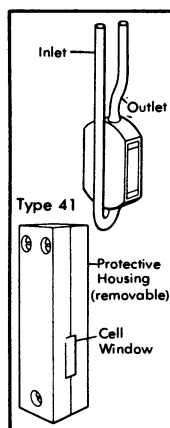
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which is finally stopped by the clouds. Large variations are seen both from point to point on the surface at a given time, and at a given region from day to day, which are effectively weather variations (1). A plausible reason, suggested by A. Young, as to why the detected amount of water is so relatively small at the rather high (240°K) temperature of the atmospheric region in question, is the very low vapor pressure of water over sulfuric acid cloud drops.

As for Mars, an alternative to loss of its water to space is the probability that large amounts of water may be locked in the crust as permafrost, also as ice crystals laid down in the great beds of aeolian deposits and in the polar caps of unknown depth. This picture is supported by the almost continuous sub-freezing temperature of nearly all the martian surface, by the nevertheless near-saturation amounts of water vapor which we often find in the martian atmosphere, and by the tendency for the maximum atmospheric water vapor concentration to follow the subsolar point on Mars, both diurnally and seasonally (2).

HARLAN J. SMITH

*McDonald Observatory,
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1. E. Barker, *Int. Astron. Union Symp. No. 65* (1974).
2. —, *Bull. Am. Astron. Soc.* 6, 371 (1974).

The Demese of the Ne'enderthels: Wes Lengege e Fecter?

Et seems qwete prebeble that the Ne'enderthels ked speke less well then ther seccessers, end that thes wes the resen fer ther demese. Bet even ef we beleve the kempeter reselts (Research News, 15 Nov. 1974, p. 618), et seems emprebeble that ther speech wes enedeqwete bekes ef the leck ef the three vewels seggeden. The kemplexete ef speech depends en the kensenents, net en the vewels, es ken be seen frem the generel kemprehensebelete ef thes letter (1).

JEHN H. FREMLEN

*Department ef Pheseecs,
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References

1. The neutral vowel throughout is "e," as in "her."

Kolata reports on a possible link between the disappearance of the Neandertals and their inability to use an easily understood language. However, there may be an organic cause for the disappearance of the Neandertal in addition to any language difficulties.

The Neandertals had a well-developed burial ritual. In many of the later burials it is evident that the skull had been opened to allow removal of the brain (1). Often the long bones are also cracked, apparently for the removal of the marrow. The treatment of the skull and bones suggests the use of rituals similar to those practiced by contemporary cannibalistic tribes in New Guinea and other places as documented by modern anthropologists. Such practices, in one place at least, have led to the development of a slow viral infection, kuru, in the population (2). The kuru virus is neurotropic and fatal. The infection leads to a complete degeneration of the nervous system due to the extensive viral multiplication within it. The virus may develop a long time after infection—10 to 30 years. It presumably is spread by the women and children (mainly female) eating the brains of a deceased member of the tribe or by allowing infected material to enter the bloodstream through cuts in the hands when the skull and bones are opened. Gadjusek (2), among others, has hypothesized that any tribe practicing cannibalism will develop a similar type of virus. The virus may arise from some animal reservoir but, in general, dies out in humans. However, cannibalism permits serial passage of the virus from human to human, thus increasing its virulence and infecting the population. The prevalence of this disease combined with increased devotion to cannibalism would lead to annihilation of a tribe, similar to that once facing the Fore in New Guinea. It has been suggested that the virus may survive in the earth surrounding the bones. Perhaps incubation of this earth would indicate its continued virulence (3).

Retardation in the development of a language on an anatomical basis could, of course, further decrease the chances of survival of the few remaining members of the tribe. A language problem would also isolate them from a larger competing population. We should include the possibility that, if the Neandertals were warring with the Cro-Magnons, their lack of ability to pronounce the vowels [a], [i], and [u] would perhaps have affected a "shib-

boleth" (4). Thus "bat" would have been pronounced "bot" by Neandertals, who failed the test (and failed to live).

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Delaney Clause for Birth Defects

The letters from Bowne (18 Oct. 1974, p. 195), a chemist, and Barus, an engineer, which in essence support a Delaney clause for birth defects, miss the point of the Teratology Society resolution (Letters, 6 Sept. 1974, p. 813) cautioning against attempts to implement such a regulation.

Substances such as sugar, salt, and vitamin D have all been shown to be teratogenic in some species in some doses (1), and there is suggestive evidence that vitamin D in very large doses is teratogenic in humans. Indeed it appears one may postulate as a general principle that for any agent x , one can find a species y and a dosage z , such that at dose z or greater, x is teratogenic in y . Thus any regulation for birth defects which ignores dosage or species considerations, as a Delaney regulation does, is likely to have consequences quite unexpected by those familiar with the pertinent literature. For example, a Delaney regulation for birth defects would probably lead to a ban on a supplement of vitamin D in any dose in milk. It is a moot question whether this or any other consequences of such a regulation would diminish the incidence of human birth defects, and the net effect on public health might well be negative.

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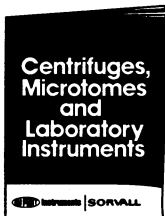
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Because review and evaluation of scientific work often call for even higher levels of care and experience than does new research, peer evaluation of proposals for review preparation or data evaluation is especially appropriate. Funds for reviews must be protected by special budget allocation and should be supported by the same mechanisms that support new research, rather than primarily by information dissemination offices.

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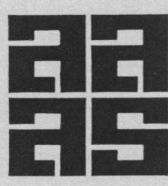
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