Letters

Journal Space

We believe that Herbert Schumann and J. J. Zuckerman are unnecessarily harsh about the practice of "relegating" certain experimental data to microform (Letters, 21 May, p. 800). In American Chemical Society (ACS) journals, every care is taken to retain in the printed journal data that would likely be needed by a substantial fraction of readers of a particular paper. What is deposited in the ACS system is information that is likely to be of great interest only to a very few readers. Granted that it is more time-consuming to retrieve the information from a microform edition than it would be if it were printed with the paper; the fact is that the information *can* be obtained—and more dependably than from the original author's old filing cabinets.

The real question concerns the best use of space in journals. We believe that it makes most sense to print that information which is most pertinent to the bulk of those interested in a paper. Printing peripheral material merely takes up expensive space that could better be used for another paper in these days of distinctly finite journal page budgets. Experiments with "miniprint" several years ago do not change our overall view—if it's worth printing at all, it's worth printing legibly. Miniprint is not only difficult to read in printed form, it is almost totally illegible in microfiche and microfilm editions of the journals.

D. H. MICHAEL BOWEN
Books and Journals Division,
American Chemical Society,
Washington, D.C. 20036

Uranium Enrichment

Colin Norman, in his briefing "Livermore wins laser battle" (News and Comment, 21 May, p. 830), understates the present state of uranium enrichment by gas centrifuge technology. Norman writes that a "pilot centrifuge plant is now under construction in Portsmouth, Ohio"; however, this plant is a multibillion-dollar construction effort of a full production facility. Three private industries (Boeing Engineering and Construction, Garrett Corporation, and Goodyear Aerospace) are building centrifuge enrichment plant machines in new manufacturing facilities. The gas centrifuge process is thus far more than "still under active consideration."

The Department of Energy official quoted by Norman was Donald Gestson, and the atomic vapor laser isotope separation demonstration plant will be in Oak Ridge rather than Livermore.

RONALD O. HULTGREN
Centrifuge Technology Division,
Oak Ridge Operations,
Department of Energy,
Post Office Box E,
Oak Ridge, Tennessee 37830

MX Basing Modes

R. Jeffrey Smith's article "Air Force takes aim at a Big Bird" (News and Comment, 16 Apr., p. 270) does not discuss the main point concerning the MX basing issue. Every system that we could field can be countered. The question is how much does it cost the Russians to develop the counterthreat? I believe that the Air Force's main concern with the Continuous Patrol Aircraft basing mode is whether it is vulnerable to relatively inexpensive counterthreats. The work now being performed is to develop cost exchange ratios for the different MX basing modes in order to select the mode that will be the most difficult for the Russians to counter. The Continuous Patrol Aircraft is on the list and is being evaluated by a Defense Science Board committee under the direction of James Fletcher, a former administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

The original Boeing position was that the Continuous Patrol Aircraft was technically feasible. As we refined our numbers they did change somewhat, but the conclusions on technical feasibility did not change. We at Boeing are trying to provide data to support a rational decision by the government on the MX basing mode. We do not yet have data on cost exchange ratios for all the options and therefore have not established a position on the best basing mode.

RICHARD HARDY
Boeing Military Airplane Company,
Post Office Box 3707,
Seattle, Washington 98124

Duplicate Publication

I write regarding my report "Extrinsic microbial degradation of the alligator eggshell" (4 Dec. 1981, p. 1135), which I submitted to *Science* on 17 October 1980. I used much of the data from this report in a paper submitted on 30 September 1980 to *Experientia*. I had intended to withdraw the *Experientia* paper if the manuscript for *Science* was accepted. However, due to a gross oversight on my part I failed to withdraw it, and the paper appeared in volume 37, 1982 (p. 252) of *Experientia*. I apologize to readers for any inconvenience caused by this duplication.

MARK W. J. FERGUSON
Anatomy Department,
Medical Biology Centre,
Queen's University of Belfast,
Belfast BT9 7BL, Northern Ireland

George, Not Charles

M. Mitchell Waldrop, in his Solar System Briefing "The origin of the moon" (7 May, p. 606), quotes Michael J. Drake as ascribing the Pacific Ocean origin of the moon theory to Charles Darwin. I think he meant to let George do it. George Howard Darwin was the fifth child of Emma Wedgwood and Charles Robert Darwin and, while undoubtedly overshadowed by his famous father, was an eminent scientist in his own right.

JOHN BRUNN
Division of Science and Mathematics,
Chabot College,
Hayward, California 94545

Erratum: In the article "An alternative to the MX" (News and Comment, 21 May, p. 828), an excerpt of a report by the Central Intelligence Agency should read as follows: " . . . not only are their [Soviet] submarines more vulnerable to detection, but the self-generated noise reduces the effectiveness of their own sensors." The adjective "more" was inadvertently omitted in the article.

Erratum: The briefing "GAO points up military use of shuttle" (News and Comment, 14 May, p. 717) states that Defense Department missions will occupy 49 percent of the space shuttle's flights over the next 3 years. The percentage is correctly applied to total missions during the next 13 years.