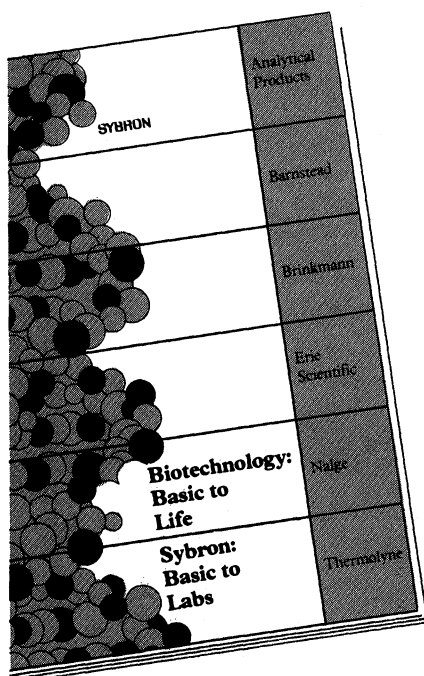


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ter] brings on its Control Data CYBER 205." Later he hints that the European Center may well jump ahead again when they get their next-generation computer. One source is quoted as suggesting that this added computer power "would be to increase the model's resolution."

The "race" for bigger computers should not be simply a matter of increasing model resolution. Using a bigger computer to increase resolution is analogous to using a bigger hammer on a small nail just to drive it in further or faster. Brute force! A better approach might be to redesign the nail in order to better match it to both the wood and the hammer. In the case of NWP, resolution (the hammer) is only part of the problem. Data quantity and quality and model physics (the nails) are equally important. The outcome of the race will depend not only on who has the best computer but on who uses it best.

Kerr implies that the race centers on lengths of usable forecasts and states that the ultimate length is about 10 to 12 days. Most users of weather forecasts would prefer that accuracy be improved on all time scales. Improvements in short-range forecast accuracy are just as important as extending the length of present skill from 6 to 12 days.

Finally, Kerr implies that all improvements in weather forecast accuracy are tied to NWP. Surely NWP is important, but so are making sensible inferences from the numbers, displaying the forecast well, and making good use of the prediction. Without parallel improvements in these less glamorous aspects of weather prediction, the winners of any race for the best NWP may find they are only ahead at the first lap.

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Metric System in Britain

I hope you will permit a native of the United Kingdom and visitor to your shores to comment on Edward Leete's letter (29 Apr., p. 462) about the lack of use of the metric system in the United Kingdom.

The whole metric system is very firmly established in Britain, but its introduction, as prudence would dictate, involves a long changeover period during which imperial and metric measures coexist. Nevertheless, most prepacked domestic goods are now sold by metric weight (our

2-pound bag of sugar weighs 1 kilogram) and volume (the gallon can actually contain 5 liters); even booze comes in 75-centiliter bottles. Petrol is sold by the liter, and distances are beginning to be given in kilometers.

The clincher is that imperial measurements are simply not taught in school. Within a short time of my 10-year old daughter's first exposure to her American school she confidentially asked me if this "yard" that Americans talked about was something like a meter.

Leete's suggestion that we might be enamored of the mile because of Roger Bannister's athletic achievement a generation ago takes no account of the fact that the British currently have world-ranked athletes who compete at distances of 100, 200, 400, 800, 1500, 5000, and 10,000 meters.

Of course, London still has the Mile End Road, Blackpool its Golden Mile, and if you give someone an inch they're bound to take a yard; but I suppose some things will never change.

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Organometallic Clusters

So far as I am aware, attempts to prepare practical catalysts by depositing organometallic clusters on supports have been unsuccessful, and the effort could now be likened to an aging, promising young man who keeps on promising for too long. The article by Thomas H. Maugh II (Research News, 6 May, p. 592), reports this sentiment, but it may not be clear that my opinion applies to the preparation of useful catalysts and not to matters of scientific interest. Indeed, I have been involved in a small way in two projects using metal clusters, one in collaboration with D. F. Shriver and the other with J. B. Butt and J. B. Cohen.

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Erratum: In Thomas H. Maugh II's Research News article "New agents active against herpesviruses" (15 Apr., p. 292), Raymond Shinazi was incorrectly reported to have found that 2'-fluoro-5-iodoarabinosylcytosine (FIAC) is "the most potent and effective drug known to date" against herpes encephalitis in mice. Shinazi found that 2'-fluoro-5-methylarabinosyluracil (FMAU) is the most effective drug against this disease.