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COVER

Articulate brachiopods (three Terebratalia transversa, curved gapes) and other suspension-feeding marine benthos on steep 70 degree rock, Turn Rock, San Juan Channel, Washington (depth, 70 feet). Yellow scallop (Chalmys) with marginal eyes; six edrioasteroid-like plated holothurioids (Psolus chitonoides, salmon color), three with crimson feeding podia extended; single orange solitary coral (Balanophyllia elegans) and branched bryozoan, both above the scallop. Purple crust is coralline alga Lithothamnion. (Field of view about 10 centimeters wide). See page 1527. [Charles W. Thayer, Department of Geology, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia 19104]

Social insects

Ants, bees, wasps, and termites live cooperatively in colonies that often are very large (one ant "supercolony" had 306 million workers and 1 million queens) (page 1489). Wilson describes survival strategies that may contribute to the ecologic success enjoyed by social insects. Numerous individuals concentrate on performing single tasks, thus increasing the probability that the task will be accomplished. Each individual has specialized skills. Each belongs to a caste, determined by a series of environmental factors acting during development. Silent capabilities can, however, be restored in emergencies, even in adults. During its lifetime, an individual may perform a number of tasks, each taking it farther from the center of the nest until, in old age, it moves outside the nest to forage or to defend the colony. An understanding of insect colonial life may help clarify organizational principles of developmental and physiological processes in higher organisms.

Mussels and brachiopods

When given a choice in the laboratory, fish, starfish, snails, and crabs all preferred mussels "on the halfshell" to brachiopods that, served the same way, caused convulsions and regurgitation (page 1527). These shelled organisms face common predators in the sea. Thayer studied the survival of brachiopods in trays planted underwater. Some trays also contained mussels. When predators were excluded, mussels overgrew and smothered brachiopods. When predators were given access (see cover), brachiopod survival improved because the mussels were eaten. Brachiopods were one of the most abundant marine organisms in the Paleozoic era, but mussels predominated later, in the Mesozoic. The mobility of mussels may have given them an advantage during the Mesozoic, and the "bad taste" of the brachiopods may then have evolved as protection from increasing numbers of predators.

Clues from feldspar

The discovery of 300-million-year-old potassium feldspar in 500-million-year-old limestones in the Appalachian mountains provides evidence for a migration of fluids during the time this mountain chain was forming (page 1529). The age of the feldspar, a common mineral of Earth's outer crust, was determined by measuring an argon isotope that forms during radioactive decay. Hearn and Sutter suggest that the feldspar formed when potassium-rich salt solutions (brines) were forced out of nearby sedimentary rocks and reacted with sand and clay in the limestones. These results could help explain how and when nearby deposits of zinc and lead formed, because these elements may have been dissolved in the same brines and deposited when conditions were favorable.

Hookworm

The most economical and effective control for hookworm in endemic areas may be intensive drug therapy for heavily infected individuals rather than blanket therapy for the community (page 1537). Schad and Anderson studied hookworm in a village in India before and after a community-wide drug treatment program. Certain individuals were particularly susceptible, becoming heavily loaded with worms at every reinfection. Ten percent of the villagers had 60 percent of the worm burden. In India, monsoon seasons create conditions favorable for infections. Larvae hatch from eggs in moist, fecescontaminated soil. They penetrate the skin, usually through the feet. The worms hook onto the host's intestinal lining, suck blood, cause anemia, and produce eggs that are excreted in the feces. It is not known whether such factors as genetic predisposition, hygiene, or socioeconomic status contribute to the special susceptibility of certain individuals to this infection.

Ion microscopy

The distribution of simple ions (such as sodium, calcium, phosphorus, and magnesium) that are crucial for regulating biochemical processes inside cells can be studied by ion microscopy (page 1543). Chandra and Morrison describe the distributions of sodium and potassium ions in cultured rat cells in a prototype experiment. Freezedried samples were bombarded by a beam of ions; through a process called sputtering, atoms at the surface of the sample were emitted as secondary ions. The emitted ions passed through a mass spectrometer, where they were identified. The final visual image provided a picture of their distribution in the cells, because spatial relationships among ions were retained. Cells expend enormous amounts of energy maintaining the appropriate balance of ions, and this technique should be useful for defining ionic relationships in a range of physiological conditions.

New cancer drug

A new drug, MRA-CN, is 150 to 1600 times more potent in killing tumor cells in culture than is doxorubicin, a major anticancer agent from which it is derived; and some tumor cells that resist doxorubicin can be killed by MRA-CN (page 1544). These two anticancer drugs are anthracyclines, a class of agents known to disrupt DNA. A ring structure inserted in MRA-CN in place of an amino group in doxorubicin may, in addition, cross-link strands of DNA. Sikic *et al.* found that both drugs caused similar cardiotoxicity (a major liability in doxorubicin use) in a model system. However, because MRA-CN is so much more potent, lower doses might be used and toxic effects minimized. The new drug is being evaluated for use in targeted rather than systemic therapies, which would further reduce toxicity.

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LETTERS

Fusion Program

The article "Hard times in magnetic fusion" by Mark Crawford (News and Comment, 31 May, p. 1069) states that I am "...gone." This letter is to observe that my "goneness" (to paraphrase Mark Twain) has been somewhat exaggerated. In particular, my interest in the magnetic fusion program remains strong, and I have attempted, as a private citizen, to contribute to it.

This year I suggested to congressional committees that the Department of Energy (DOE) be requested to study the concept of a magnetic fusion research facility at a DOE site with remoteness, security, Nuclear Regulatory Commission and DOE supervision, tritium handling capability, available hot labs, waste disposal facilities, low-cost electric power, and scientific and engineering support.

The rationale for this suggestion is based partially on the now generally accepted realization that the future of the magnetic fusion program probably lies in any of several machines which are much smaller than today's large mainline experimental devices and which could be tested much more cheaply and quickly.

Because some small machine concepts may evolve into competitive devices for the production of electricity, it is my opinion that private industry could be drawn into R&D programs for them, if there were a facility where they could be tested with deuterium-tritium burns. (The production of 14 mev neutrons and the resultant induced radioactivity precludes such testing at a university campus or at a conventional industrial laboratory.)

A DOE fusion research facility, which could be on-line 5 to 7 years after commitment, would be easily affordable, even with a reduced fusion budget. It could give life and meaning to a program that may otherwise be in great danger.

The United States will need all the electric generating capacity it can get, starting before the year 2000 and for an indefinite period thereafter. With luck and prudent leadership now, fusion power could enter the generation market early in the 21st century. Citizen involvement from within the scientific community could help make that possible.

MIKE McCormack* McCormack Associates, Inc., 508 A Street, SE, Washington, D.C. 20003

*Former member of Congress.

Trichinosis Test

I am pleased that the ELISA (enzymelinked immunosorbent assay) test developed for swine trichinosis by the U.S. Department of Agriculture received attention in *Science* (News and Comment, 8 Feb., p. 621). Because the eventual application of this important control strategy by private industry will depend upon a realistic understanding of its capabilities and its potential cost-benefit features, several points mentioned in Gina Kolata's article should be clarified.

It is implied in the article that the "window of vulnerability" of the ELISA, that is, the discrepancy in time between development of infective muscle larvae and detection of antibody, is insignificant. However, there is evidence that the muscle larvae may reach the infective stage as early as 16 to 17 days after initial infection, rather than 24 days (1, p. 42). In contrast to heavily infected hogs, many with light infections (one larvae per gram of muscle or less) may not produce antibody levels detectable by the ELISA until 4 to 5 weeks or longer after infection; this provides an interval of 2 weeks or more in which infectious hogs may go undetected (2). Epidemiological investigations reveal that the majority of naturally infected hogs have such light infections (3, 4). How frequently this situation may arise under natural conditions is at present conjectural, and many authorities in this field feel that such lightly infected hogs are not an important public health hazard. Still, it is not clear that serological tests can provide complete detection.

Because ELISA testing of market hogs is not the only potential inspection procedure now being given serious consideration in the United States, the statement in the article that the pooled digestion test has the disadvantage of not allowing convenient tracking of individual muscle samples should be clarified. The procedure as developed in Denmark (and now officially sanctioned by the European Economic Community) easily allows testing of individuals in a positive pool. Given the very low prevalence of infected swine in the United States (about 1 hog in 1000), the probability of finding a positive pool requiring individual testing is only 1 in 50. Recent epidemiological investigations show that most infected hogs are marketed through smaller slaughterhouses (5), many of which will require relatively unsophisticated inspection techniques. Therefore the pooled digestion test could prove to be a successful alternative.

Several other points require comment. The number of deaths from trichinosis reported to the Centers for Disease Control is not several per year; such deaths occur infrequently. Also, it is not correct that pigs from southeastern farms have a high incidence of trichinosis. Except for occasional cases of swine and human trichinosis in Louisiana, the south as a whole appears to have one of the lowest incidence rates for trichinosis of any region of the United States.

Finally, it should be noted that Ruitenberg and Van Knapen and their associates in the Netherlands first published the basic ELISA method for swine trichinosis and provided a scheme for its application for large-scale testing (6).

K. DARWIN MURRELL Helminthic Diseases Laboratory, Animal Parasitology Institute, U.S. Department of Agriculture, Agricultural Research Institute, Beltsville Agriculture Research Center, Beltsville, Maryland 20705

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On Objectivity

The mind tends to categorize things as "good" or "bad" and then to become relatively impervious to information that runs counter to these initial impressions. For example, disarmament proposals are "good." Some of them would weaken us to the point that war would become more likely, but anyone saying so is called a "hawk," at the very least. Automotive pollution-control devices are "good." Cars equipped with three-way catalysts emit from 20 to 150 times more sulfuric acid than older cars, but to discover this one must read an obscure Environmental Protection Agency paper. Acid rain is "bad," but it is caused by industrial pollution, so one need not worry about cars. Removing lead from gasoline is "good." Older cars need a small amount of lead to lubricate their exhaust valves and prevent worsening of both performance and emissions, but one learns this from car magazines, not scientific journals. Moreover, the composition of unleaded gasoline must be altered to restore antiknock properties. What longterm health effects this alteration causes are unknown, but to my knowledge the question has not been raised.

It is as though doing something "good" absolves one from the responsibility of knowing about, much less preventing, any foreseeable bad results of such action. This mode of thinking is all too human, but it should be guarded against by scientists and particularly by editorial boards.

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Solitary Grazers

Roger Lewin's recent article on increased foraging efficiency in gregarious grazers (Research News, 3 May, p. 567) indicates it is "theoretically" possible for a solitary grazer to maintain a grazing lawn on its own and therefore reap the benefits of enhanced food quality. However, Lewin suggests that predation would select against such solitary grazing patterns. In fact, there are solitary vertebrate grazers that increase feeding efficiency by maintaining "grazing plots." Bjorndal (1) found that the green turtle Chelonia mydas maintained grazing plots of young leaves of the abundant turtle grass Thalassia testudinum by consistent recropping. The result was consumption of significantly more digestible forage (11 percent higher in protein and 100 percent lower in lignin) than ungrazed older leaves. Therefore, enhanced nutrition through maintenance of a grazing lawn is not only selected for in some cases of gregarious grazing vertebrates, but also in some solitary grazers. In contrast to gregarious grazers, solitary grazers can avoid concomitant costs associated with increased resource competition while still enjoying enhanced foraging efficiency.

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Erratum: In the article, "Generics, Roche joust for Valium market" (News and Comment, 26 Apr., p. 472), a word was inadvertently omitted from a quote by Wallace Mendelson, a researcher at the National Institute of Mental Health. The quote should have read that there is "no established way to predict from Valium's effects on a normal pe son's EEG's, its ability to relieve anxiety, relax muscles, or treat convulsions."

Erratum: The authors of the Research Article "Chromatin structure and de novo methylation of sperm DNA: Implications for activation of the pater-nal genome" (31 May, p. 1061) were Mark Groudine and Kathleen F. Conklin. Conklin's name was mis-spelled in the Table of Contents and in the by-line.





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Electric Power from the North

Six Canadian provincial utilities export electricity to the United States: New Brunswick, Quebec, Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and British Columbia.* It is now technically and economically feasible to transmit power over long distances. British Columbia has sold hydroelectricity to Los Angeles for about 2 cents per kilowatt hour, roughly half the local cost of generation from oil. New England, New York, and some upper Midwest states have also been the beneficiaries of bargain-rate Canadian power. Thus far, the imports have largely involved interruptible power, but negotiators are talking about long-term contracts for "firm" power. The Canadians possess the necessary engineering experience, managerial skill, and hydropotential to develop large additional power supplies. With benefits to both countries, Canada could ultimately replace a large fraction of the U.S. electricity currently generated from oil. The barriers are regulatory and political.

Utilities did not foresee the oil crisis of the early 1970's and its major effects on the economy. Now, in both the United States and Canada, there is excess generating capacity. The Canadians have not experienced so much of the costly regulatory delays and litigation common in the United States. Many of their plants were built within budget. Exporting surplus power to the United States is profitable. Quebec, Manitoba, and British Columbia deliver hydropower; New Brunswick supplies nuclear power; Ontario provides nuclear, hydro-, and coal-derived power. Saskatchewan depends on cheap coal.

Utilities in the United States that burn oil or natural gas must guess about prices of these fuels in 1995 and beyond. Estimates are that costs will be higher—perhaps much higher—than they are now.

The potential hydropower of Canada is large. Total stream flow there is about 1.5 times that in the United States. Undeveloped power is on the order of 100,000 megawatts. Most of the rivers discharge to the north. Many of the important sites for plants are in sparsely settled areas far from the U.S. border. Some of the choice sites are in British Columbia, Manitoba, and Quebec. In Quebec, Robert Bourassa, former premier of the province and current leader of the Liberal Party, has made export of electricity a major campaign issue. He has recently published a book designed to influence opinion in the province and in the United States.[†] In it, he advocates a 12,000-MW expansion of hydroelectricity for export purposes. He states that, after providing for Quebec's needs, there is a total of 20,000to 30,000-MW potential in the contiguous Quebec-Labrador landmass. He refers to engineering achievements that have already earned Hydro-Ouebec an outstanding international reputation. He emphasizes the hazards and environmental damage arising from nonrenewable sources of electricity while extolling the value of clean, renewable hydropower.

Quebec would reap many benefits from exploiting a resource that is now wasted. Construction would provide many jobs. The electricity would be sold at a profit. After fulfilling a long-term contract for delivery of firm power, the facilities would be available for local needs or for additional sales. The cost of electricity to U.S. utilities would depend on their contribution to financing the project as well as on interest rates.

Expansion of power from the north will occur, but probably slowly. Rules of state regulatory commissions discourage movement of surplus power even within the United States. Installation of transmission lines is vigorously opposed. People and politicians here and in Canada will find reasons to delay action. However, renewable hydropower carries with it minimal environmental consequences, and for the long haul it is in many instances the least expensive source of electricity.-Philip H. Abelson

^{*}See Northwest-Midwest Institute and Canadian Institute of International Affairs, *Trading in Power: The Potential for U.S.-Canadian Electricity Exchange* (Northwest-Midwest Institute, Washington, D.C., 1984). †R. Bourassa, *Power from the North* (Prentice-Hall, Scarborough, Ontario, 1985).

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