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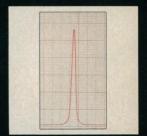
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Successful aging

UCH research on aging has concentrated on normal, or average, changes that take place in older people, while the substantial heterogeneity among the elderly of the same age has been overlooked (page 143). Losses in cognitive and physiologic function have been attributed to the aging process, but they might more properly be attributed to factors extrinsic to aging. Rowe and Kahn emphasize that many of these age-associated changes that have been viewed as normal and natural are subject to purposeful modification and can lead to successful rather than usual aging. Desirable interventions might include modification of exercise and diet, training programs to prevent or reverse cognitive loss, and provision of social support for health care and reduction of stress at times of bereavement and relocation. Research that links the psychosocial and physiologic aspects of aging could help promote health and prevent disease.

Gravitational wave astronomy

CCORDING to Einstein's theory, gravity waves are ripples in the Lacurvature of space-time and carry energy and momentum at the speed of light. For more than two decades, physicists have been trying to detect gravitational waves from astrophysical sources by use of massive antennas, usually solid cylinders of aluminum with a fundamental resonance frequency near 1 kilohertz (cover). Astrophysical sources such as supernovae or the gravitational collapse or coalescence of solar-mass size objects are expected to emit gravitational radiation at frequencies near this spectral region. Michelson et al. (page 150) review the progress that has been made in the design of resonant-mass gravity wave detectors and outline efforts under way to improve the sensitivity of detectors by five orders of magnitude. These include reduction of thermal and amplifier noise, isolation of vibration, and use of cryogenic techniques. The ultimate sensitivity that might be reached in a few years would enable detectors to be sensitive to mechanical strains of about 10^{-20} , which should be adequate to open a new branch of astronomy, gravitational wave astronomy.

Duplex perception of speech sounds

COUSTIC patterns sufficient to synthesize syllables such as "da" ▲ and "ga" on a computer contain a frequency sweep called a transition that represents changing resonances as the tongue and jaw move from a consonant to a vowel (page 169). Heard in isolation, this transition sweep is perceived as a "chirp." Embedded in a syllable, it provides the information necessary for distinguishing between "da" and "ga." Whalen and Liberman found that if the sound intensity of the transition is increased relative to the base, it is possible to hear both a speech sound and a chirp at the same time. This is a form of duplex perception in which speech and nonspeech components are heard at once. At low transition intensities only speech is heard; at higher levels both speech and chirp are heard. These results are consistent with a theory of speech which holds that the processing of speech sounds take precedence over nonspeech, as if the phonetic mode of perception takes precedence over the auditory mode, a reflection of the profound biological significance of speech.

Records of precipitation fluctuations

HE potential climatic effects of increasing amounts of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere have focused attention on the record of surface temperatures (page 171). Most general circulation models of the atmosphere predict that surface temperatures will rise in response to increasing CO₂, and there is evidence in the historic records that such a rise has already occurred. The models do not give a clear answer to the question of how precipitation patterns

might change, and there has not been a corresponding effort to determine what changes might have taken place already. Bradley et al. have compiled precipitation records for the last 100 to 130 years from more than 1400 stations in the continental regions of the Northern Hemisphere and have compared the results with predictions of general circulation models of increases in greenhouse gases. Significant increases in precipitation have occurred at mid-latitudes and decreases at low latitudes during the last 30 to 40 years. This pattern is in accord with predictions of some of the models. However, the pattern may indicate natural climatic variability and not necessarily represent the effect of anthropogenic increases in CO₂.

Seizure-induced expression of c-fos

¬ XPRESSION of the c-fos gene in the brains of mice may be regulated by neuromodulators and neurotransmitters (page 192). The gene c-fos is the cellular homolog of the oncogene v-fos, which is carried by some osteogenic sarcoma viruses of mice. It encodes a protein (Fos) that is associated with chromatin and exhibits DNAbinding activity. Treatment of mice with Metrazole (pentylenetetrazole), a convulsant agent used to study epilepsy, caused a rapid and dramatic increase in c-fos messenger RNA in the brain. Morgan et al. studied the time course and distribution in the brain of the expression of the c-fos gene in mice injected with Metrazole. Increased levels of the Fos protein were found in the dentate gyrus and in the pyriform and cingulate cortices, and later, throughout the cortex, hippocampus, and limbic systems. Expression of c-fos messenger RNA reached a peak in about 60 minutes and then declined to basal levels by 180 minutes. The mice were refractory to reinduction of c-fos during this period and for some time afterward but were still susceptible to seizure induction by Metrazole. The c-fos protein can be used as a marker to follow the temporal and spatial involvement of subsets of neurons during epileptic seizures.

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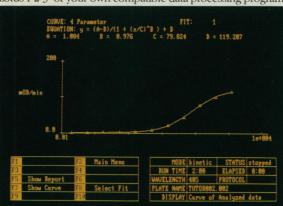
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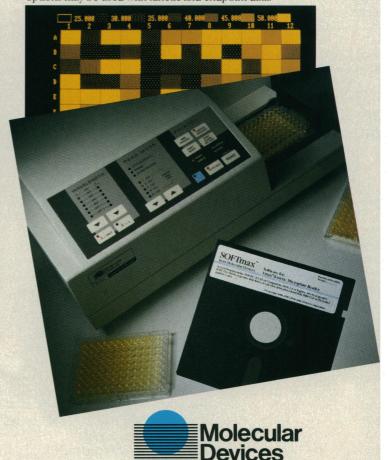
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Petroleum Research Centers

n terms of resource potential for liquid fuels, the United States is extremely well endowed. It has huge reserves of coal that could be liquefied and vast deposits of oil shale. The estimated resource of petroleum is 625 billion barrels, which far exceeds the present reserves of Saudi Arabia. However, the tasks of converting U.S. resources into reserves involve large expenditures and long delays. In general, the costs far exceed the \$18 per barrel price established by the Organization of Petroleum Exporting Countries. Because of this low price, the major oil companies have downgraded the coterminous 48 states as an area for exploration. Instead they are emphasizing offshore, frontier areas and foreign prospects.

There are good reasons to believe that targeted R&D could go far to reduce costs of converting an important fraction of the 625-billion-barrel resource to producible reserves. However, the small independent companies who will drill for and find most of the oil that is discovered do not have research competence. The major companies have dispersed much of their research staffs. The federal government retains the outdated policy that the majors will do what is needed. Consequently, only tiny federal support has been available for improving the efficiency of petroleum exploration and practically nothing for advancing the technology of obtaining synthetic fuels from coal or shale. This year \$43 billion for imports; small change for liquid fuel research.

It has long been known that only about a third of the oil that has been discovered has been produced. During the period from 1979 to 1985, it became evident that a larger fraction could be extracted. Earlier, wells were spaced as much as a mile apart. It was assumed that reservoir strata were sufficiently porous and uniform that the mobile oil in place would flow to the wells either under existing pressure or as a result of a water drive. To take advantage of the high prices existing in the early 1980s additional so-called infill wells were drilled in existing fields. Many of these were good producers, thus showing that reservoir rocks are often heterogeneous and compartmentalized. On average, the successes were such that it was profitable to drill when oil was \$30 per barrel, but not \$18.

Improvements in the knowledge of what to expect in heterogeneous reservoirs could enhance the success rate for drilling and thus lower costs. It would also improve the effectiveness of technologies for enhanced oil recovery based on carbon dioxide or on detergents. If such an opportunity exists, why have the major companies not exploited it? The answer seems to be that the large companies have emphasized discovery and production from giant fields. Their R&D has been aimed chiefly at improved discovery of large deposits.

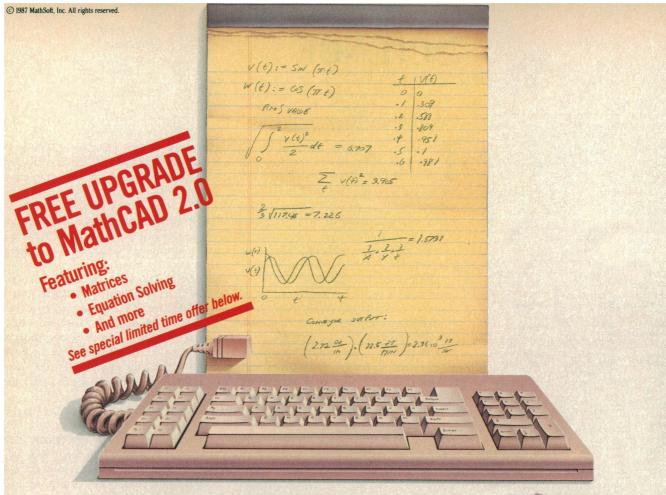
A recent report of the Energy Research Advisory Board (ERAB) urges studies that address the problems of reservoir heterogeneity.* It calls for enhanced integration of sedimentology, geophysics, geochemistry, hydrogeology, petroleum and chemical engineering, and geostatistics to define the origin and distribution of heterogeneities within petroleum reservoirs. The information available to address this problem includes drilling cores, logs, and seismic and engineering data. This would be supplemented by seismic tomography, three-dimensional reflection seismology, and measurements of variations in shear or S waves. This and other information would be incorporated in models relating geologic measurements to engineering factors. The objective would be to understand enough about heterogeneities to provide a scientific basis for predicting well spacing and enhanced oil recovery potential.

To implement such an effort the ERAB report recommends the creation of oil and gas research centers within each of the six major oil and gas provinces of the United States. These centers would conduct and coordinate the necessary interdisciplinary problemoriented research. Some of the work would be conducted in university-based centers.

William Fisher of the University of Texas has stated that with greater efficiency of discovery of oil, as much as 80 billion barrels of oil could be produced for less than \$25 per barrel. In view of the sums of money we will be spending on imports, the effort to attain greater efficiency should be supported.—PHILIP H. ABELSON

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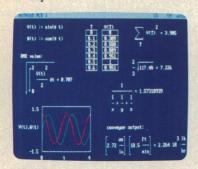
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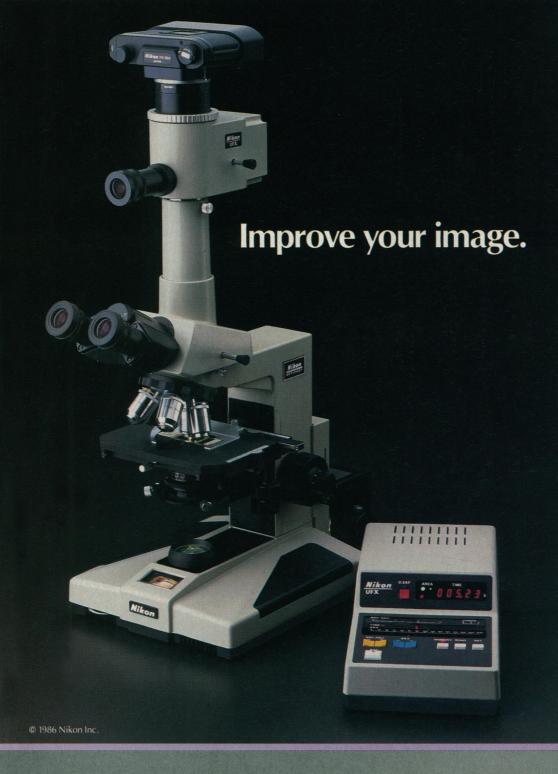
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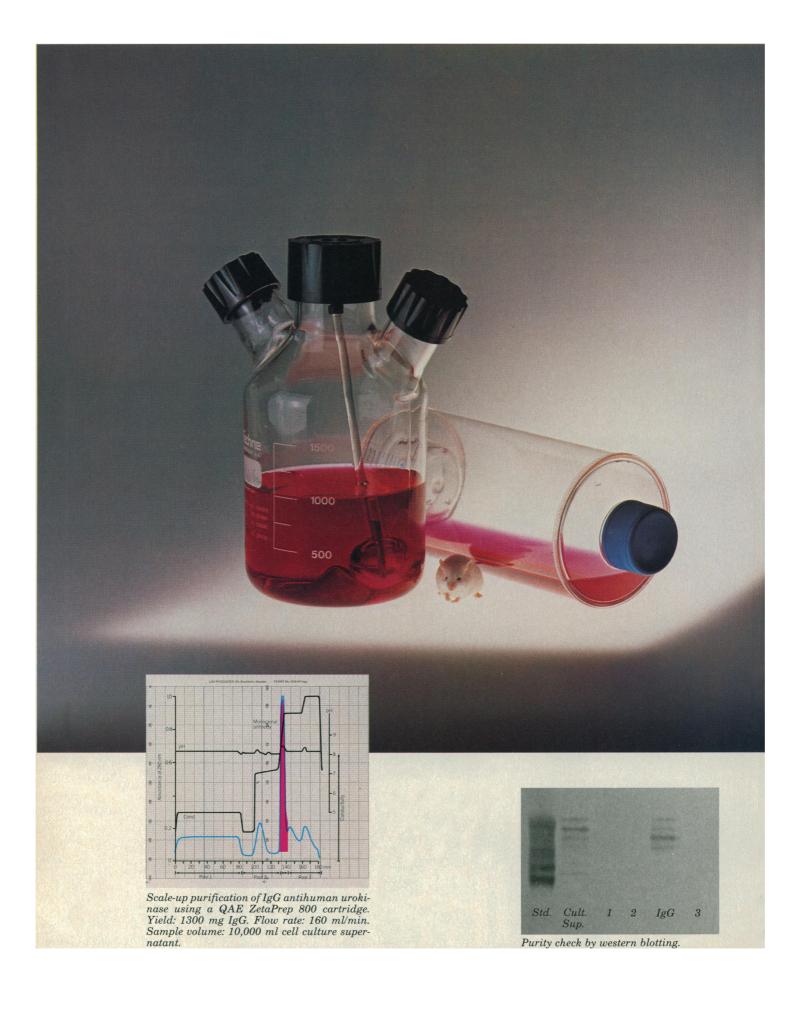
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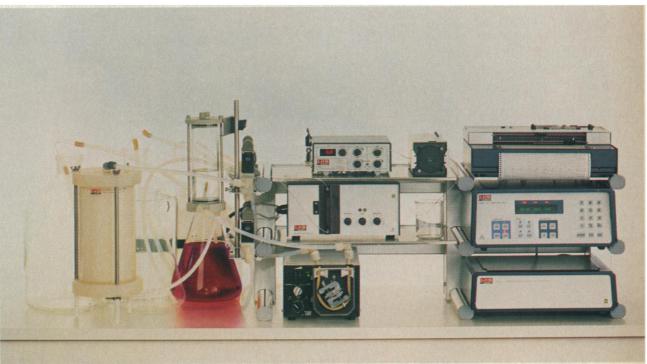
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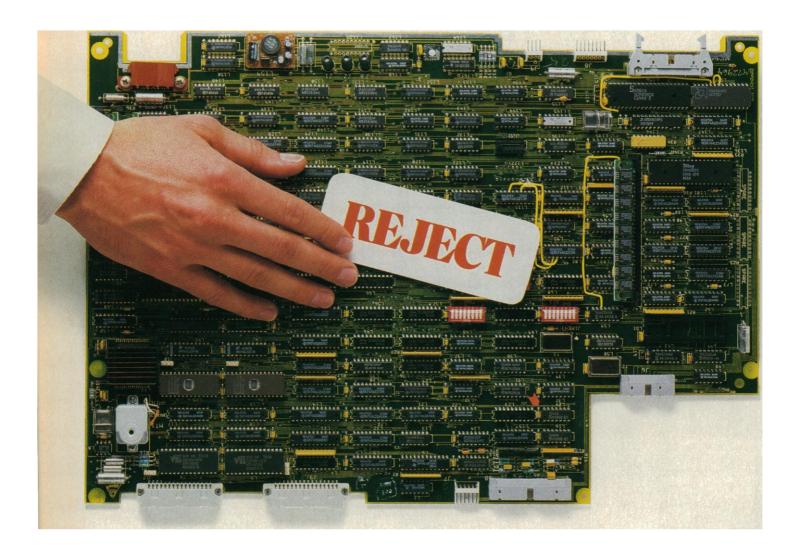
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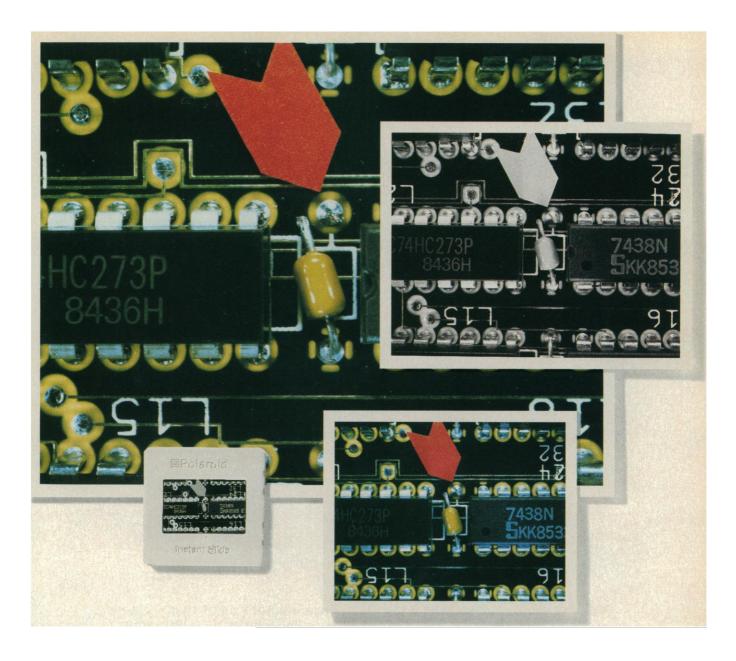
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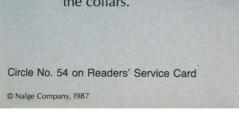
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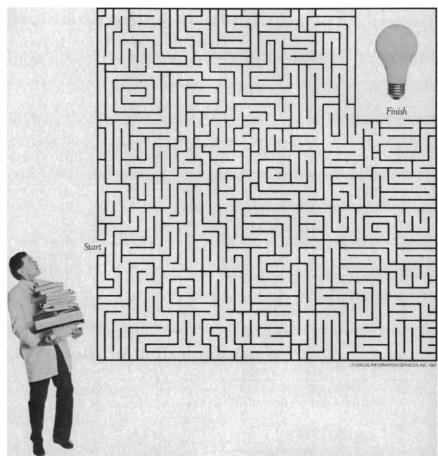
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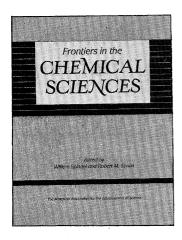
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