Letters

Recycling

Thomas H. E. Quimby's letter (2 Mar., p. 854) concerning the ambiguity of the term "recycling" gets to the bottom of the pile of semantic trash. Since all paper is now and has always been made from natural plant fibers, all paper in some sense is recycled.

The present issue is just how far along the trail of use and discard did the fiber go before it was recycled. The ends and scraps from the highest grade, pure linen shirts are used for paper; however, are they really "recycled"?

Truly recycled paper is known in the industry as: "nondeinked postconsumer waste." This means it was once printed paper that was used by consumers and then totally recycled with all of the oils and inks left in (without fouling more water to clean them out).

Contrary to most opinions, very fine grade scientific books can be printed on this stock. A prime example is the new reference work, *The North American Reference Encylopedia of Ecology and Pollution* by William White, Jr., and Frank J. Little, Jr. (North American, Philadelphia, 1972). It is a pioneering effort to publish a serious ecological work on 100 percent used material. With a lot of effort and a little expertise it can be done.

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AAAS Vietnam Resolutions

I must protest, in the strongest terms possible, the Vietnam Resolutions passed by the AAAS Council. The council has no business whatever becoming involved in political considerations. Even if council members would prefer to designate the Vietnam war as a moral consideration, it is outside their realm of competence and authority. They do not represent my views nor those of a vast number of other members of the AAAS.

If council members cannot refrain from attempting to impose their political concepts on the AAAS membership by virtue of their council affiliation, they should resign. If they do not, conscientious members of the AAAS should resign from the association. Any further abuse of privilege by council members will result in my instant resignation.

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Mercury in Benthopelagic Fish

In their report "Mercury concentrations in recent and ninety-year old benthopelagic fish," R. T. Barber, A. Vijayakumar, and F. A. Cross (10 Nov. 1972, p. 637) state that there is "evidence that there has not been a change in Hg [mercury] concentration in these benthopelagic fish during the last century," which is not supported and, in fact, is apparently contradicted by the data presented in the report itself.

In Fig. 1 of the report by Barber *et al.* the distribution of values obtained for the Hg concentration in the 1883 fish does not overlap and lies considerably below the distribution of values found in two current fish of the same species and size. In Table 1 of the report, where mean values are given, the Hg content of an *Antimora rostrata* of current vintage that is 45.7 centimeters long is 40 percent greater than that of the comparable 1883 fish, a difference of more than 10 standard deviations.

If these data do not show an increase of the concentration of Hg with time, they certainly cast profound doubt on the possibility that the concentration in these fishes has remained unchanged with time.

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In our report we stated that "The relatively good fit of the 1883 *Antimora* to the size-concentration regression line for nine 1971 fish is evidence that there has not been a change in mercury concentration in these benthopelagic fish during the last century. . . ." Saperstein wishes to compare our single 1883 fish with the two recent fish of the same length; we prefer to compare data on the 1883 fish to the regression line based on all nine contemporary fish. To do this we compared the mean Hg concentration of the 1883 fish with the 99 percent confidence interval around the regression line. The mean Hg concentration of the 1883 fish was 0.50 ± 0.03 part per million (ppm) (wet weight). The lower 99 percent confidence value predicted by the regression for a fish the same length as the 1883 fish (45.7 centimeters) is 0.51 ppm (wet weight). On the basis of this evidence (0.51 versus 0.50 ± 0.03) we considered the date on the old fish not to differ from the regression line of the contemporary fish. The choice of a method for making the comparison is obviously important in this discussion. We did not make the kind of comparison Saperstein did because our data for recent fish did not enable us to estimate the variation that exists between individual fish of a given size, but our data did enable us to estimate the variation around the size-concentration regression line. Readers may decide for themselves which method of comparison they prefer.

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Pregnancy and Famine

In the article "Nutrition and mental performance" by Stein *et al.* (17 Nov. 1972, p. 708), the authors conclude that no apparent relation exists between mental performance at age 19 and prenatal exposure to the Dutch famine of 1944–1945. Before the validity of this conclusion can be accepted, there are several related questions that should be answered. First, is there some threshold of nutritional deficiency of the mother beyond which the mentality