

nomenclature has decreed that—with one exception—only goddesses and famous women can lend their names to features on the love goddess's planet, whose craters, calderas, and mountains immortalize luminaries from Helen of Troy to Christa McAuliffe.

Now the club is expanding, thanks to the mapping efforts of the NASA spacecraft Magellan, which is turning up new features every time it zips around the planet. The IAU is looking for about 4000 new names, according to this month's *Final Frontier* magazine. No live women need apply: Those immortalized must be dead at least 3 years. Suggestions can be sent to Venus Names, Magellan Project Office, Mail Stop 230-201, Jet Propulsion Laboratory, 4800 Oak Grove Drive, Pasadena, California 91109.

And who's the exception? Physicist James Clerk Maxwell, whose mountain was named before IAU's feminist decree. Because of his importance, the union is letting him stay. And wouldn't you know it: The mountain named after him is the tallest on the planet.

Animal Rights Food Groups

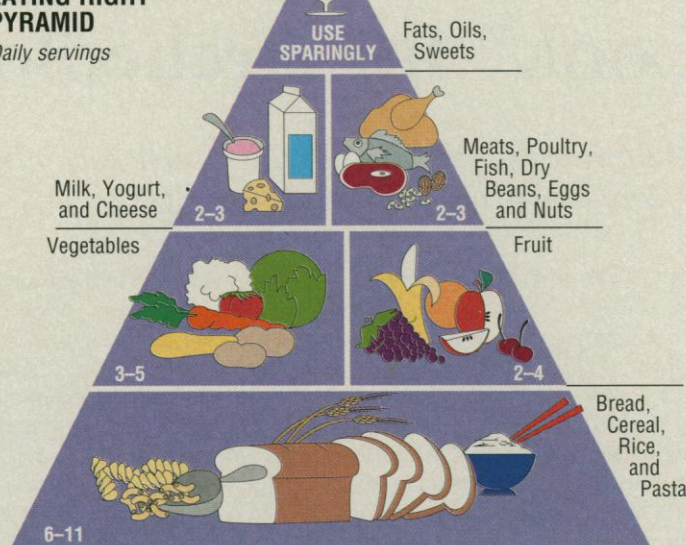
You may have seen the news last month about a radical re-vamping of the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) "four food groups" proposed by a physicians' group. And you might have noticed that the recommended diet contained no mention of animal protein—not even fish or dairy products.

But what you wouldn't know, at least from the coverage of its 8 April press conference in *The New York Times*, was that the group—the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine—is closely allied with animal rights organizations.

"Since physicians are not noted for leading the nutrition charge, what this group had to say was all the more remarkable," the *Times* food writer in-

THE EATING RIGHT PYRAMID

Daily servings



Back to the wheel. Politics as well as science seem to keep the area of nutrition a permanent battlefield. The Department of Agriculture recently reorganized its "food wheel" into a pyramid (above) to represent its recommended eating priorities more graphically. But meat and dairy industries raised a ruckus, saying the chart "stigmatized" their products by placing them too near the ogres of fat and sugar. The pyramid was to be publicized later in the spring but has now been withdrawn.

nocently noted. But even though few nutrition experts have heard of the committee, many scientists are familiar with the group and its leader, Neal Barnard, a psychiatrist who acts as a medical adviser to People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA). Like PETA, the physicians' committee has devoted most of its energy to opposing the use of animals in research.

In keeping with this focus, the physicians' group—which claims 3000 members—endorses a diet based on whole grains, vegetables, legumes, and fruits, even for infants and pregnant women. Milk and meat "are simply not necessary in the human diet," says the group's nutritionist, Virginia Messina, formerly of George Washington University's health service.

Other experts disagree. Alicia Moag-Stahlberg, a nutritionist at Northwestern University Medical School, says it is "potentially dangerous" to swear off meat, fish, and dairy products. It is "very, very difficult for the average person to plan a healthy vegetarian diet," she says.

Crowded Dial

The music of the spheres is increasingly being drowned by the din of radio programs, communications satellites, and even garage door openers (see *Science*, 15 March 1991, p. 1316). Radio astronomers have gone

on the offensive in a new report* from the National Academy of Sciences, arguing that they can ill afford to lose any more ground to commercial radio broadcasts.

"There is tremendous pressure to expand the use of devices operating at radio frequencies," says astronomer Marcus Price of the University of New Mexico, chairman of the committee that produced the report. "We want to make sure that the bands currently allocated [for radio astronomy] continue to receive protection."

Among the group's recommendations is the creation of a "lunar quiet zone" on the far side of the moon for future radio observatories or communications links. They also call for protection of radio frequencies important for studying pulsars, and urge that radio astronomers around the world be allocated the same frequencies so that radio telescopes can be coupled by very long baseline interferometry.

Astronomers will soon find out if anyone is tuned in to their pleas: The 1992 World Administrative Radio Conference will focus on global frequency allocations.

*"Views of the Committee on Radio Frequencies Concerning Frequency Allocations for the Passive Services."

Thier to Head Brandeis

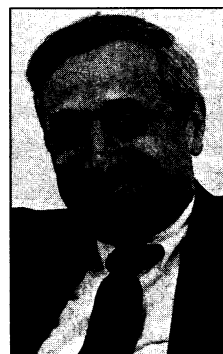
Samuel O. Thier, head of the Institute of Medicine (IOM) of the National Academy of Sciences since 1985, has agreed to become the next president of

Brandeis University starting in October. He'll succeed Evelyn E. Handler, who resigned last year.

Thier's departure from IOM "was a surprise even to me," says Wallace Waterfall, IOM's director of communications and a personal friend of Thier. Last Octo-

ber, says Waterfall, Thier, 53, agreed to a second 5-year term if the academy "would get all of IOM under one roof." The academy is now consolidating operations from three buildings into a large waterfront office on the Potomac.

But Thier is leaving anyway—ending an agonizing 9-month search at financially troubled Brandeis. Thier is credited with having attracted large amounts of money to the IOM, and Brandeis officials are no doubt hoping for some of the same medicine.



Samuel O. Thier

Leah Roberts