Response: In reply to Priscilla (!) Wilkins Stevens, we must state that the ELVIS motif was sought by examining the National Biomedical Research Foundation database for the single letter amino acid codes E-L-V-I-S. ELVIS was indeed found on four occasions, as we stated. It was only when mere mortals (J.B.K. and H.L.T.M.) interfered and erroneously translated single-letter amino acid codes back into three-letter codes that the ELVIS impersonator (EKVIS) surfaced. The correct second amino acid in this motif is not Lys, but Leu, as in "(B)Leu Suede Shoes." Obscuring the true identity of "The King" was inadvertent, and we hope not to be held accountable to a higher authority (*1*). Fortunately, this is not just another cruel hoax: ELVIS (Glu-Leu-Val-Ile-Ser) lives!

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NOTES

1. We will *not* be returning the sequined jumpsuits we recently purchased for our upcoming lecture tour on this topic.

Ecological Economics

In Leslie Roberts' article "Academy panel split on greenhouse adaptation" (News & Comment, 14 Sept., p. 1206), Yale economist William Nordhaus is quoted as saying, "Agriculture, the part of the economy that is sensitive to climate change, accounts for just 3% of national output. That means there is no way to get a very large effect on the U.S. economy." That statement should have caused the resignation of some economists along with the dissenting ecologists. A moment's reflection on the diamonds-water paradox, the law of diminishing marginal utility, and the inelasticity of demand for food in general should convince anyone that the current 3% figure could soar to 90% in the event of a serious disruption of agriculture. No doubt adaptation would be possible, since in the past agriculture accounted for 90% of the national product and we (many fewer of us) survived. But the percentage of the gross national product derived from agriculture is a measure of its importance *only* for marginal changes. The assumption is that climate change will be marginal. The percentage of gross national product accounted for by agriculture adds no evidence or reason for complacency beyond the bald and dubious assumption that any climate change will be obligingly marginal. Of course the dependence of economic activity on natural systems goes far beyond agriculture, but the Academy has to get its basic economics right before it can advance to ecological economics.

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Supporting Life on Earth

I applaud *Science*'s effort (16 Aug.) to address the issue of biodiversity, but the topic is far more important than *Science*'s treatment indicates. The problem is not merely extinction, but global biotic impoverishment: the systematic reduction in the capacity of Earth to support living systems. It includes the destruction of forests and their replacement by shrublands, by grasslands, and in many cases by barren soil. It includes the cumulative and largely irrevers-

ible effects of chronic disturbance of all kinds on natural systems. One-third of the land area of India is now recognized as so thoroughly impoverished as to be outside agriculture and outside forestry; much of it supports no green plant. Does that type of impoverishment involve a loss of species? It certainly does. But it also includes a far greater biotic loss: the loss of potential for supporting life. The solutions advocated by the writers in the special issue are all appropriate; they are, however, inadequate to address the crisis of life on Earth and the issue of how many people can be supported, and how well Earth's biotic systems will continue to support them.

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Standardized Brain Mapping

The recent recommendation by the Institute of Medicine to begin a Brain Mapping Initiative (Research News, 28 June, p. 1794) will undoubtedly engender considerable discussion. As a neuroscientist frequently engaged in mapping the distribution of particular gene products in the rat brain, I suggest that before any money is allocated, the neuroscience community agree on a common nomenclature for the many brain regions. Moreover, we need to agree on boundaries of brain regions and on abbreviations for a common nomenclature. I have often expended a considerable amount of frustration trying to compare results from my lab with results from other labs that use a different nomenclature, different abbreviations, different regional boundaries, or different levels of resolution. As a first step, I suggest that all investigators localizing a particular gene product, binding site, or anatomical pathway in the rat brain use the same atlas, namely, *The Rat Brain in Stereotaxic Coordinates* by George Paxinos and Charles Watson (Academic Press). A similar "standard" atlas should be developed for the human brain and for other species commonly used for neuroanatomical studies.

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CARET Study: Women Included

Jean Marx's articles (News & Comment, 9 Aug., p. 612) about cancer prevention were valuable, but unfortunately gave the impression that the National Cancer Institute (NCI)–supported CARET study includes only men in the trial. This is not the case. This study will test a combination of beta carotene and retinol for prevention of lung cancer in high-risk subjects, including about 4,000 asbestos-exposed male smokers and about 14,000 heavy smokers, about half of whom are women. The investigators were not able to identify women exposed to asbestos, but had no difficulty finding women who were heavy smokers.

The NCI believes that interventions to reduce the morbidity and mortality from disease that affect both sexes, as lung cancer does, should be evaluated among both sexes. The importance of this approach is underlined by the fact that the lung cancer toll from smoking among women continues to climb.

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