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Letters

Calcium clarification

The reporting of my results in "Bone density drops with thyroid therapy" (SN: 6/4/88, p.359) was inaccurate. I reported at the American College of Sports Medicine meeting that increasing calcium intake to over 1,500 mg/day could increase bone density *only in heavily exercising women who had previously lost bone due to long-term menstrual irregularities*. The calcium had no effect in women athletes with no history of menstrual dysfunction, and we did not study nonexercising or only mildly exercising women. In addition, low-dose estrogen with calcium remains the treatment of choice with short-term (less than three years) athletic amenorrhea.

Christopher E. Cann
Professor of Radiology
University of California at San Francisco
San Francisco, Calif.

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Cover: As in this stained-glass design, tiles in the shape of skinny and fat diamonds can be laid down to create a pattern with fivefold symmetry. Now researchers have described a set of simple rules specifying how each tile must fit with its neighbors to extend such a pattern, known as a Penrose tiling, indefinitely. These rules guarantee that no impossible-to-fill gaps spoil the pattern's perfection. Moreover, they suggest important alternative strategies for growing quasicrystalline materials. (Photo: James T. Jolliff Jr.)
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Perfect Penrose Tilings

Ignorance, greed and apathy

In "Unraveling the Economics of Deforestation" (SN: 6/4/88, p.366), Janet Raloff argues that forest conservation is in a government's own interest but that many governments unintentionally promote environmental damage through misguided policies. Another possibility is that some government officials are aware of the environmental destruction but pursue such policies because their interests do not coincide with the interests of their peoples.

When political authorities maximize the wealth and power of themselves and of certain special interests and constituents, they may deliberately favor the short-term exploitation of resources at the expense of long-term economic damage, which will occur when they no longer hold office. In addition to ignorance, political greed and apathy may

explain why so much obvious destruction occurs.

Fred E. Foldvary
Dale City, Va.



This week's cover features a photograph sent in by a SCIENCE NEWS reader, James T. Jolliff Jr. of Smithfield, N.C. Inspired by a tiling pattern shown on the cover of the March 23, 1985 SCIENCE NEWS, he transferred part of the design to a stained-glass panel for his den. "I thought you might be interested in seeing a picture of it," Jolliff wrote in a letter to the editor late in 1985. His photograph now provides a striking introduction to a new article on Penrose tilings.

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