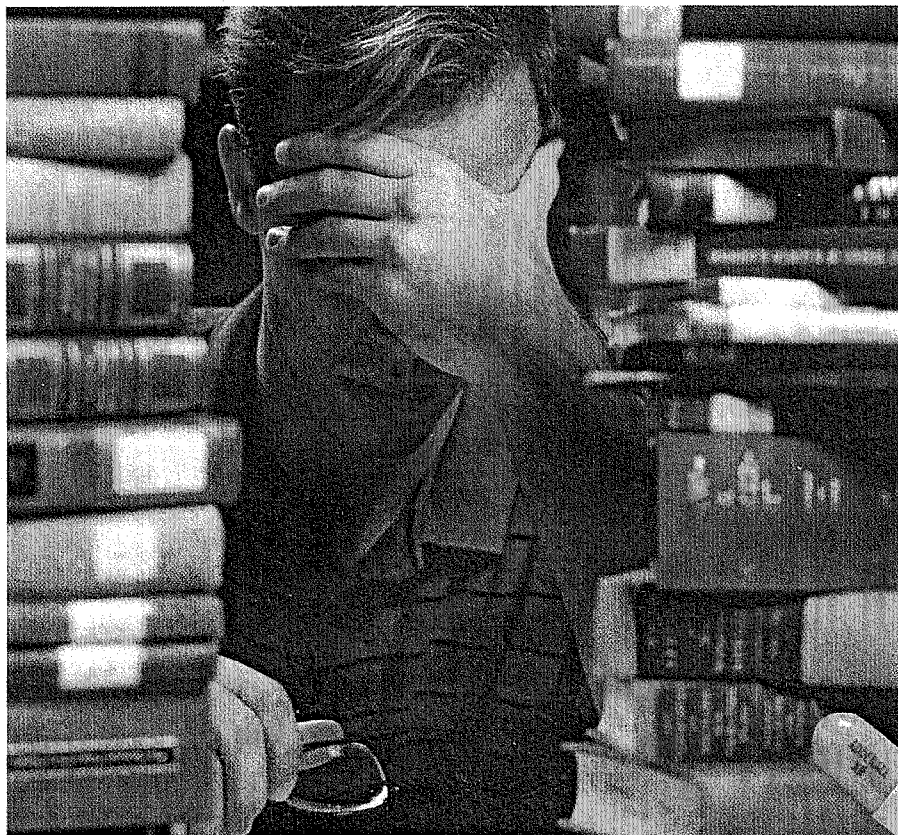


NEWSFRONT

**Tune In, Turn On, Kick Ass**

LONDON—Writing in the journal *Nature*, a group of American and British academics and scientists published a “call for a presumption that mentally competent adults should be able to engage in cognitive enhancement using drugs” such as Ritalin, Adderall, modafinil and others. “Human ingenuity,” the article reads, “has given us the means of enhancing our brains through inventions such as written language, printing and the Internet. Most authors of this commentary are teachers and strive to enhance the minds of their students, both by adding substantive information and by showing them new and better ways to process that information. And we are all aware of the abilities to enhance our brains with adequate exercise, nutrition and sleep. The drugs just reviewed, along with newer technologies such as brain stimulation and prosthetic brain chips, should be viewed in the same general category as education, good health habits and information technology—ways that our uniquely innovative species tries to improve itself.”

Rated Mature

KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI—After studying how sex is addressed in nursing homes, researchers from Kansas State University have put together a series of seminars to educate workers about how to handle sexual topics with older adults in their care. “It was liberating to some folks to have an open discussion with university researchers,” says Lillian Claassen, a health services administrator at a home in Hesston, where the researchers offered a training session. “It empowered people to think about how they could help folks.” That’s a good thing—and long overdue, particularly with the number of sexually progressive baby boomers on their way to such facilities in the near future. As Gayle Doll, the director of KSU’s Center on Aging, points out, “Nursing homes are the second-most-regulated industry in the country, behind nuclear power plants. But none of those regulations address sexuality. Consequently, no one knows how to handle it.”

Campus Clampdown

EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN—A Michigan State University student who sent an e-mail asking 391 faculty members to comment on a proposed change in university policy was found guilty by the school of unauthorized use of a university network, or spamming. “MSU’s decision defies the First Amendment, fairness and common sense,” says Adam Kissel of the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education. “MSU is effectively preventing the campus community from sending e-mails criticizing the administration to more than an extremely small fraction of the MSU community. The university should be ashamed, and the president should immediately overturn this illiberal finding.”

Windows on the World

CHICAGO—Factory workers at Republic Windows and Doors staged a sit-in after management shut the facility down, blaming its lender, Bank of America, for the company’s inability to pay severance

and accrued vacation averaging \$6,250 per worker. (Bank of America says the company’s management is to blame.) “We need only what is promised to us, nothing more, nothing less,” says Apolinar Cabrera, who worked at the factory for 17 years. “I know the economy is bad, but this just isn’t right to do this to us.” Meanwhile, banks on the receiving end of tax-funded bailouts paid their executives year-end bonuses.

Terminator Time

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A new generation of military robots will be increasingly autonomous rather than remotely controlled by humans the way drones currently are. Israel and South Korea already use robotic border guards, and the U.S. military has funded development of new machines that can decide on their own when to attack.

