

# Institute plans national sickle cell anemia study

**United Press International**  
WASHINGTON — The National Institute of Health is sponsoring a large, national study to investigate the natural course of sickle cell anemia, the life-shortening blood disease that strikes one of every 500 to 600 American blacks.

Dr. Marilyn Gaston, of the sickle cell disease branch at the National Heart, Lung and Blood Institute, said the study is designed to answer some questions about what happens to sickle cell victims over periods of years. Besides improving treatment of sickle cell patients, she said it will provide information on which future research may be based.

Even though doctors have known about the disease since the 1940s, they have a poor understanding of its progression from birth to death because of the wide variation in its severity and complications. Many victims die early, but others live for decades.

This lack of understanding affects treatment of the disease, which is both incurable and inherited, and it means that doctors are unable to predict the outcome for babies born with sickle cell anemia.

"Knowledge of risk factors, rates of progression and the incidence of complications and the effect on the life of the patient will directly aid physicians in the evaluation and care of sickle cell patients," Gaston told a recent meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

In addition, Gaston said, accurate information in the effects of sickle cell anemia on the economic, educational, vocational, social and psychological status of the patient will provide a firm basis for making policy decisions concerning the delivery of health care and social services to these patients.

"Therefore," she said, "it is anticipated that this collabora-

tion effort will serve as a major source of data, which will enhance the improvement in the quality of life for patients and families with this illness."

The study involves 23 medical centers across the nation and one statistical coordinating center. A total of 3,535 patients are being studied. They have been divided into four groups—newborns, children up to age 9, those between 10 and 19 and patients 20 and older.

The plan is to first gather background information on each patient—including his past medical histories and laboratory reports. Then, each patient will be examined routinely every six months. Doctors will monitor any organ damage caused by the disease, and all acute and chronic complications will be recorded.

The medical centers participating in the study are Duke University, Durham, N.C.; the Medical College of Georgia at Augusta; Boston City Hospital;

Children's Hospital of Boston; Jewish Hospital of Brooklyn, New York; the State University of New York's Downstate Medical Center in Brooklyn; Michael Reese Hospital, Chicago; Wyler Children's Hospital, Chicago; the University of Mississippi in Jackson; the University of Tennessee, Memphis; and St. Jude's Hospital, Memphis.

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## Quirks in the News

**United Press International**  
PALM SPRINGS, Calif. — It's not clear if the cars were too small or the cops too big, but city officials had to cancel their order for 14 new patrol cars because many officers couldn't fit inside comfortably.

Chief Tom Kendra said Tuesday he had asked city officials to cancel their order for Ford Futuras, a move that will cost up to \$2,000 extra per vehicle, and a possible \$5,500 penalty to the dealer.

One officer said when he heard the City Council had approved purchase of the small cars, he went to a Ford dealer one night and found an open Futura, which he got into and discovered he could barely fit.

He told the chief, who told the councilmen, who canceled the order. Some of the cops said their heads "bulged" the roof of the car and another said his knees kept knocking the shift lever into neutral.

stage at the British Crown Colony sports stadium, ripped off his suit and emerged as a costumed Man of Steel—or man of strings. The roar from the audience of 7,000 drowned out the opening of the concert, officials said.

### Wanted: jobs

DETROIT — Michigan's high unemployment rate has prompted the Detroit Free Press to offer free "situation wanted" ads to job seekers in its Jan. 26 and Feb. 2 classified advertising sections.

People without jobs can place such an ad of up to five lines without charge, the newspaper said.

Michigan traditionally has the nation's highest unemployment rate; last month it was 14.4 percent—up 2.6 percent from December—with thousands of auto workers on both permanent and indefinite layoff.

### Conductor turns super

HONG KONG — John Giordano, normally a mild-mannered music director for the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra, tore off his suit on stage to the delight of his audience.

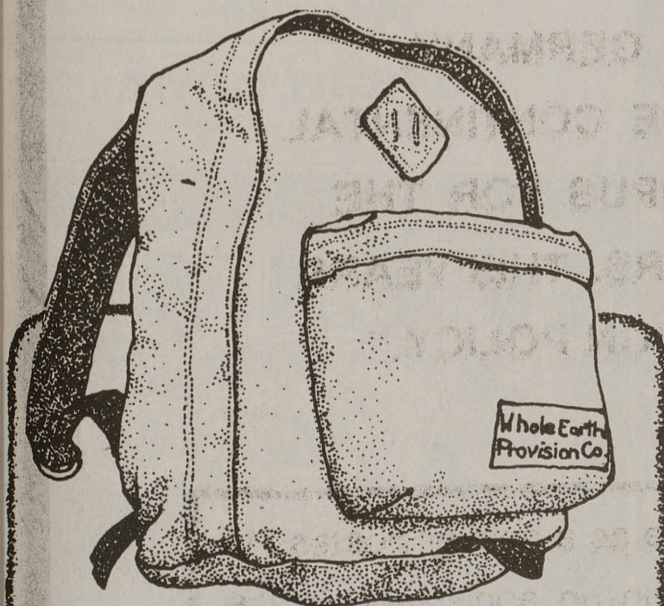
Giordano was conducting the Hong Kong Symphony last week, featuring the theme from the movie "Superman." And like all great conductors, Giordano got into his music.

The bespectacled Giordano hopped into a phone booth on

### Stolen snake needs warmth

LOGANSPORT, Ind. — George Voltz hopes whoever stole his boa constrictor will keep it nice and warm because the kind of weather Indiana's been having can be fatal to the snakes.

Voltz, owner of the Animal Empire pet store, said someone entered the store Tuesday, removed rocks weighing down the top of the snake's cage, and walked out, unnoticed, with a 3½-foot boa constrictor.



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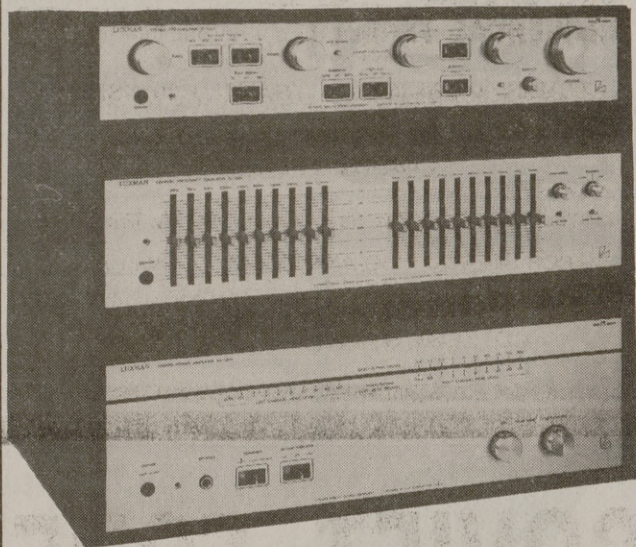
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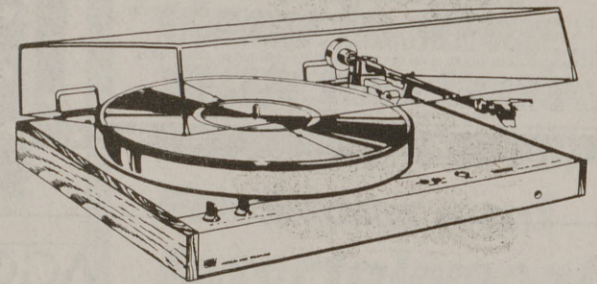
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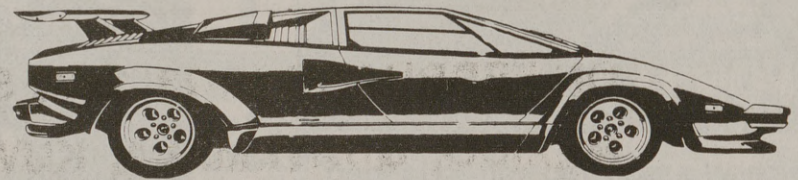
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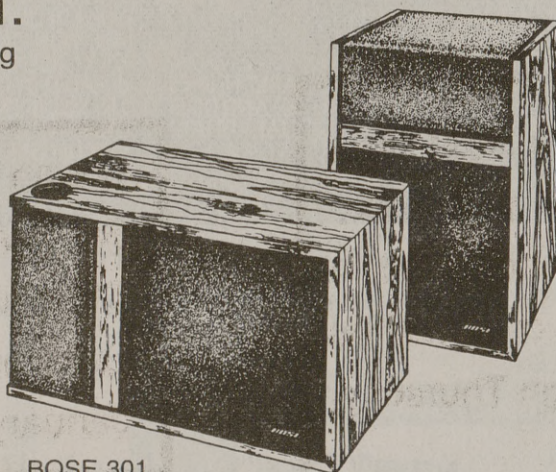


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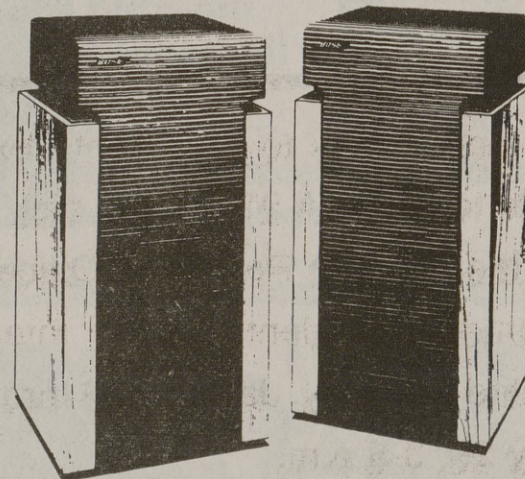
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