

PYRAMID POWER

Pyramids, say believers, can keep food fresher and improve sex and personal well-being. We search for the scientific evidence behind these claims.

by Marvin Grosswirth

Now it came to pass that a Searcher of Truth journeyed across the vast oceans and into the barren desert even unto the Great Pyramid. And the Searcher of Truth discovered therein a mysterious Power. "What manner of Power is this?" saith the Searcher of Truth. "Yea, verily," spake other Searchers of Truth, "it is the Power of the Pyramid, a Power the force of which traverses the barren desert and vast oceans, a Power capable of strange and wondrous manifestations." Wherefore all the Searchers of Truth went forth and proclaimed the Power of the Pyramid. And it is truly written that mighty and wondrous indeed is the Power of the Pyramid, for it hath transcended Time and Space to generate that which, among all that man desires, is desired most: Ready Cash.

ACCORDING to the proliferating proponents of Pyramid Power, a pyramid is capable of everything from preserving meat to improving sex. Pyramid Power, if one believes the propaganda, can sharpen razor

blades, raise the quality of wine, increase the productivity of seeds and plants, prevent milk from souring, heal bodily complaints, enhance virility and promote general well-being. To be sure, such claims have yet to be accepted by the scientific community and there are skeptics who believe it is all nonsense, but of one truth there can be no doubt: there is a lively commerce in what can only be described as "pyramidabilia."

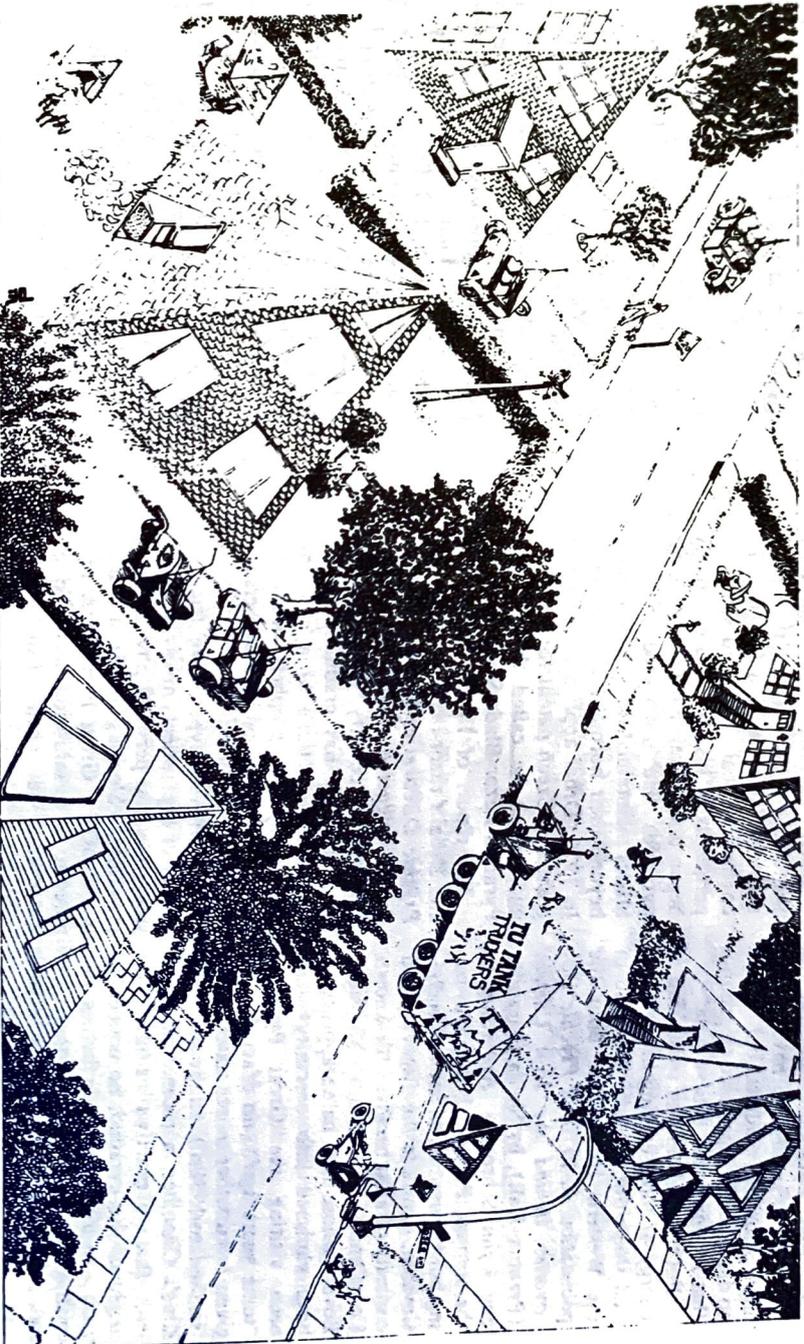
Pyramids in general, and the Great Pyramid of Cheops in particular, have long intrigued researchers and scientists. Although the Great Pyramid was apparently built as a tomb, and contains a sarcophagus, there is

no evidence that the sarcophagus was ever occupied by the earthly remains of Cheops or, for that matter, anyone else. The Encyclopedia Britannica describes the Great Pyramid as "perhaps the greatest single building ever erected by man." It contains some 2,300,000 blocks of stone, each of which was cut with a precision worthy of the most modern technology. Tackle and pulleys were unknown during the reign of Cheops. (ca. 2900-2877 B.C.), and questions as to how the architectural feat was accomplished have given rise to considerable speculation, ranging from theories about the construction of a sloping embankment of ever-increas-

ing height to belief in the beneficent intervention of extraterrestrial visitors.

However they accomplished it, the ancient Egyptians managed to raise those blocks to achieve a structure whose overall height was over 480 feet. (Its present height is 458 feet, owing to the ravages of time and man.) Each face measures 761 feet along the base. Each side has a slope of precisely 51°. The base is con-

If pyramid-shaped structures really prove to contain some kind of secret energy, then why not build entire cities out of them and forget about gas, oil and electricity?



struck on almost exact east-west, north-south axes.

For many years, theorists have attempted to credit the Great Pyramid with vast stores of astronomical and mathematical knowledge encoded within the dimensions of the structure. "The theories," says the Encyclopedia Britannica rather frostily, "which ascribe prophetic and esoteric meanings to the measurements, angles and proportions of the Great Pyramid, are wholly devoid of scientific foundation." That, of course, was before the discovery of Pyramid Power.

Throughout history, there have been various reports, of varying reliability, about strange goings-on inside the Great Pyramid. Napoleon, for example, is reputed to have spent a night within its confines, but refused to describe the experience on grounds that no one would believe him.

But the possibility of some kind of energy or force existing in the pyramid shape did not take firm hold in the Western Hemisphere until the publication, in 1970, of *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* (Prentice-Hall), by Sheila Ostrander and Lynn Schroeder. According to the authors, Pyramid Power was being put to commercial use in Czechoslovakia, thanks to the discovery and curiosity of an otherwise little-known Frenchman. A certain Monsieur Bovis (whose first name appears to have vanished into obscurity) had been visiting the Great Pyramid "some years ago" (no exact date is given, but another source states it was "in the late 1930s"). In the so-called King's Chamber, a room built at a level that is exactly one-third the height of the pyramid, he noticed a trash can containing the bodies of small animals. He was told that cats and other hapless creatures often

wander into the pyramid, lose their way, and starve to death. Attendants scoop up the corpses, dump them in the trash barrel, and when the barrel is full, it is removed and the contents buried. To Bovis's amazement, the bodies in the trash can showed no signs of decay or putrefaction. Despite the relatively high humidity of the inner chamber, the animals had dehydrated—mummified. Bovis returned home and constructed a scale model of the Great Pyramid, including a platform one-third of the way up between the base and the apex. He placed a dead cat on the platform and soon had a mummified feline. Experiments with other organic matter produced similar results.

Bovis's published findings attracted the attention of Karel Drbal (pronounced Druh-bal), a Czech radio engineer. Drbal conducted some experiments of his own and eventually began placing razor blades inside his pyramids. He discovered that the blades maintained their sharpness far beyond their normal life expectancy. In 1959, Drbal applied for and was granted a Czech patent for his pyramid, which he called the "Chops Pyramid Razor-Blade Sharpener."

The report of Bovis's discoveries and Drbal's razor-blade sharpener in *Psychic Discoveries Behind the Iron Curtain* triggered interest in Pyramid Power in this country. What began as mild curiosity has gradually developed into something of a cult, involving psychics, prophets, occultists and practitioners of various persuasions and credibility.

Less ethereal types have tried a variety of experiments involving food substances and personal physical improvement. Sleeping inside a scale model of the Great Pyramid is reputed to be as salubrious as drinking water that has been treated with

Pyramid Power. Abscessed teeth have been reported to heal themselves in record time following a night in a pyramid. Claims of increased virility resulting from sleeping in a pyramid, or imbibing pyramid-treated water, can best be described as enviable.

Of course, none of the experiments can be duplicated without a pyramid, but that is no problem; the marketplace is replete with pyramids: little pyramids and big pyramids, plastic pyramids and cardboard pyramids, pyramid frames made from plastic piping, pyramids for sleeping in,

Bovis noticed a trash can filled with dead cats in Cheops Pyramid. Oddly, none had decayed. So Bovis made a scale model of the Great Pyramid, placed a dead cat in it and ended up with a feline mummy. Thus was born Pyramid Power.

pyramids for meditating in, pyramid "generators" consisting of a whole lot of little pyramids grouped together, and even a flat pyramid. (Yes, friends, a flat pyramid; more about that shortly.) Most of the published "data" on Pyramid Power is being produced by individuals or institutions who are—either mainly or peripherally—in the pyramid-selling business.

G. Patrick Flanagan believes in Pyramid Power and G. Patrick Flanagan is a man who commands attention. At the age of 11, G. Patrick Flanagan was admitted to MIT. At the age of 14, G. Patrick Flanagan invented the neurophone, a hearing device for individuals whose aural nerves have been destroyed. At age 15, G. Patrick Flanagan was listed in *Who's Who in American Science*. Today, at the age of 31, G. Patrick Flanagan, a physicist by trade, is devoting most of his time to the study of Pyramid Power.

According to Dr. Flanagan, the

key to Pyramid Power lies in microwave waves. Microwaves are a form of electromagnetic radiation of very short wavelengths. Electromagnetic radiation consists of waves of magnetic and electrical energy which result from the acceleration of electrical charges.

Dr. Flanagan suggests that the pyramid shape is an efficient resonator of microwave signals. He explained to me that a patent application filed by NASA claims "that pyramids and cone structures are the most effective resonators for ran-

domly polarized microwave signals that can be produced. The full patent application," he went on, "discusses in detail the possibility of using the pyramid or cone shape to convert randomly polarized microwave signals in the universe into electrical power. It is claimed that this device will be far more effective than photocells for efficient energy conversion."

Dr. Flanagan has received reports that some researchers have used low density microwaves to increase alpha rhythm output. "This coincides," he said, "with the results of alpha rhythms being doubled or tripled in amplitude when the subjects were placed inside a pyramid."

"In accordance with this theory," Dr. Flanagan said, "I've done a number of experiments with various planar microwave arrays. I've taken various planar microwave resonators and tried some of the pyramid experiments. I have succeeded in achieving some of the same results,

CONDUCT YOUR OWN PYRAMID EXPERIMENTS

You will, of course, need a pyramid. Pyramids can be easily purchased, but it is also easy to build one. There are two approved methods of construction:

Method 1. Acquire an empty lot of 13 acres or more. Begin accumulating large blocks of stone until you have approximately 2,300,000 of them. Put them together so that they form a pyramid. Modern construction methods are recommended: attempts to emulate the ancient Egyptians' techniques are destined to fail, owing to the uncooperative attitudes of most authorities toward slavery.

Method 2. Acquire a quantity of sturdy, uncorrugated cardboard. (Shirt cardboard should do nicely.) Draw an isosceles triangle with equal sides of 8 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches and with a base of 9 $\frac{3}{4}$ inches. When you are sure that

you have done that correctly, draw three more triangles exactly like the first one. Cut out all four triangles and tape them together so that they form a pyramid. Place the pyramid on another piece of cardboard and trace around the bottom. This should give you a perfect square which, when cut out, forms the pyramid base.

Now draw two lines through the center of the base so that the base is divided into four equal squares. Obtain a small, nonmetallic object, such as a plastic pillbox or a matchbox, that stands two inches high. Or, using some of the leftover cardboard, construct a two-inch-high box. This will serve as your platform, which must be one-third the height of the pyramid.

Select a location for your pyramid that is reasonably distant from radios, televisions, electrical appliances, radiators and windows. With the aid of a compass, locate magnetic north and place the base of the pyramid so that one of the

lines you have drawn is situated precisely on a north-south axis. Place the platform on the base, directly in the center. If the platform is rectangular, its long dimension should also be aligned with the north-south axis. You are now ready to begin.

Pyramid experiments have been conducted with a wide variety of organic matter, including dead insects, fresh flowers, bits of fresh meat and pieces of fresh fruit and vegetables. If the specimen you are using is elongated, remember to place it, too, along the north-south axis. If all goes well, the substance should dehydrate—"mummify"—without turning malodorous and without putrefying. It is suggested that a control, consisting of the same substance and from the same hatch as that in the pyramid, be set up nearby, but not right next to the pyramid, so it cannot be affected by the structure.

Inasmuch as I am bearded, I am unable to report personally on the

efficacy of the razor blade experiment, but readers may want to attempt it because it represents perhaps the most practical application of Pyramid Power to date. Surprisingly, the experiment works best with blue steel blades rather than stainless steel, platinum, or chrome blades. Use the blade three or four times, or until you begin to feel some of the sharpness going. Place the blade inside the pyramid, on the platform, so that the ends are on the north-south axis and the cutting edges face east-west. Leave the blade in the pyramid for about a week. You may then use it as often as necessary, but make sure that between shaves, the blade stays inside the pyramid, in the prescribed position. Experimenters have reported that blades so treated have been used, with no loss of sharpness, for 40 or 50 shaves. One enthusiast claimed as many as 200 shaves from a single blade treated with Pyramid Power.

—M.G.

so it is very possible that we are dealing, at least partially, with a microwave phenomenon."

Dr. Flanagan carried the planar concept a step further: he designed what amounts to a flat pyramid, which he calls the Pat Flanagan Experimental Sensor. "A cone with a perfectly smooth surface," he carefully explained to me, "is, in effect, a pyramid with an infinite number of sides. Much of my work has been done with cones and I find that cones perform the same phenomena attributed to pyramids. If you take cross sections through a cone and then bring them down to a planar surface, you have a planar representation of a

cone—or a pyramid with an infinite number of sides. That's what this device is." The sensor consists of ten concentric copper rings, plated with 24-karat gold and mounted on a blue disc, three inches in diameter. It is purported to perform as a pyramid would. It is very pretty. It costs \$12.95. Dr. Flanagan sold me one, along with a copy of his book, *Pyramid Power*, \$6.95. Yes, even G. Patrick Flanagan, former child prodigy and present scientist, is a purveyor of pyramidabilia.

Even before acquiring my Pat Flanagan Experimental Sensor, I had already succumbed to the temptation of testing Pyramid Power for myself.

It is relatively easy to build a scale model pyramid (see the box above), but in the interests of time and in deference to my lack of manual dexterity, I obtained two models from Edmund Scientific, who supply, for four dollars, the cardboard model distributed by Toth (not to be confused with Toth, the Egyptian god of wisdom and learning) Pyramid Company, and, for \$20, a very fancy clear plastic number, complete with a platform raised to the required one-third of the pyramid's height. The instructions accompanying the four-dollar Toth cardboard pyramid said:

The six-foot surrounding environment of the pyramid should

be relatively free from high frequency voltage generating devices and extreme temperature variations. Poor or no results will be experienced if the pyramid is located near a window, radiator, fluorescent lighting, radio, television, etc.

Clearly, a Manhattan apartment is not the place to conduct pyramid experiments. I considered moving the pyramid to the offices of *Science Digest*, but I realized that the experiments involve food and I would be running the risk of having the specimens disappear before the experiment was completed. I was about to abandon the project when I turned to

the instructions accompanying the \$20 plastic pyramid. Apparently in deference to the more genteel folk who can afford the higher price, the instructions said, simply: "Pick an area away from disturbing electrical interference such as radio or television." I was back in business. I purchased a compass, located magnetic north, lined up my pyramid accordingly, and began.

The first experiment centered on three sections cut from a single banana. One section was placed inside the pyramid. Another was placed in a clear plastic cup, covered with aluminum foil (to minimize stench), and placed about two feet from the pyramid. The third piece was placed, unwrapped, in the refrigerator. Neither the plastic cup nor the pyramid was airtight, as evidenced by the small flying creatures which congregated therein.

After ten days, the banana in the refrigerator had shrunk from 55 grams to 40 grams, a reduction of 27.3 percent. Its color was unchanged, but its taste was dry and flat. The banana section in the plastic cup had shrunk from 45 gm to 38 gm, a loss of 15.6 percent. There was a puddle of liquid on the bottom of the cup and the banana itself was solid black on the outside and squishy and dark brown on the inside. The interests of science notwithstanding, I was unable to bring myself to tasting it and cannot, therefore, report accordingly. As for the banana section in the pyramid, although it had shrunk from 60 gm to 50 gm (a reduction of 16.7 percent), not a speck of accumulated moisture was in evidence anywhere. The banana itself was gorgeous: a golden yellow, flecked with rich brown spots. A thin mold had formed on the exposed edges, but when this was trimmed

away, the banana was firm and clean. Its taste was extraordinary and difficult to describe. If it were possible to make wine from bananas, I imagine it would taste much like the specimen in the pyramid.

The next experiment involved coffee. Six tablespoons of coffee beans were ground and divided into two packets of 35 grams each. One packet was placed inside the pyramid, the other about two feet from the pyramid. After 24 hours, two cups were brewed from the samples and given to the resident coffee expert to taste, without her knowing which cup was made from the pyramid coffee. She declared, after a moment's hesitancy, that one cup definitely tasted less bitter than the other. It was the cup made from the pyramid coffee.

I had less success with cigars. I placed a cigar on Dr. Flanagan's sensor for half an hour. (The accompanying instructions recommend a minimum of ten minutes.) I then compared it with another cigar from the same pack, and the "sensorized" cigar seemed to be milder. But this test was then repeated twice, without my knowing which cigar had been treated. In both of the subsequent tests, the sensorized cigars came out second best.

There are several discussions in the literature of pendulum experiments, and that seemed worth a try. I constructed a pendulum from a small brass ferrule rescued from an old lamp, and suspended it from a 15-inch length of ordinary packing twine. When I held the pendulum over both the Toth pyramid and the plastic pyramid, it swung in a distinct orbit about an inch in diameter. I also suspended the pendulum over the sensor, with similar results. As a control, I repeated the sensor experiment, and then suspended the pendu-

lum over a magnifying lens and over a tin box, both of which were the same approximate diameter as the sensor. Nothing. Only the sensor and the pyramids seemed capable of agitating the pendulum. It should be remembered, however, that with hand-held pendulums there is a degree of subjectivity: consciously, I believe I held the pendulum perfectly steady. But unconsciously, I may have wanted the experiment to work, thereby unknowingly forcing my hand to move just enough to achieve results. Dr. Flanagan, quite rightly, disapproves of pendulum experiments.

The banana in the pyramid, even after ten days, was still golden yellow . . . and the taste was extraordinary.

And finally, there was the experiment with treated water. I placed a quart jar, full of tap water, on Dr. Flanagan's sensor. After 24 hours, I removed the jar to the refrigerator and replaced it with another jar, so that after two days I was able to consume a quart of pyramid water daily. A week later, I said to my wife: "I realize that this is highly subjective, but I actually feel better now than I have for some time. I'm not nearly as tired and worn out as I was before I began drinking this stuff."

"Do you suppose," she supposed, "that it could have something to do with the fact that for the past week the baby's been sleeping through the night?" Score: Baby-1, Pyramid Power-0.

It would appear, even on the basis of my own less-than-scientific, less-than-spectacular experiments, that something is certainly going on inside all those model pyramids. The pendu-

lum experiment, for example, despite all its shortcomings, is an unsettling experience for a skeptic. But clearly, much more will have to be done by disinterested scientists. As things now stand, Dr. Flanagan is the only scientist making public pronouncements, and he has a vested interest in promoting Pyramid Power. Furthermore, he is engaged in activities which, for the time being at least, elude the accumulation of hard, scientific data: he conducts classes in "mental control of the energies of the body." Not surprisingly, the Pat Flanagan Experimental Sensor figures significantly in these classes.

There are dairy companies in Europe who supply milk in cartons with pyramid-shaped tops, claiming that the milk stays fresher longer and with less refrigeration. Various experimenters have claimed that food lasts longer and tastes better after being placed in a pyramid. If such claims are valid, then objective, scientific investigation into Pyramid Power could provide significant contributions to mankind. "I've heard from M.Ds," Dr. Flanagan told me, "chemists, physicists—a lot of people in various professions who are doing pyramid experiments and who have written to me for more information. So far, there has been no negative reaction from anyone." Perhaps not, but apparently neither have there been any published reports of controlled, objectively conducted, thoroughly documented experiments, performed by disinterested people in accordance with scientific procedures. Perhaps it is time for some university or research institute to assume the task of extensive and intensive study of Pyramid Power. If their experiments should prove fruitless, they can always sell the pyramids. Why not? Everybody else is.