

# OMNI

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**THE SKY IS FALLING**  
**A DEADLY HOLE IN THE OZONE LAYER**

**DESIGNER PROTEINS**  
**MIRACLE CURES IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**NEW PERILS OF LIFE IN ZERO G**

**WHEN GALAXIES COLLIDE**

**LISTENING FOR ALIENS**



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enough. As it stands now, American physicians lack the technology and know-how to remove skeletons from bodies: specialized holding facilities and chemical solutions are required, and selling any part of the human body in this country is illegal.

"It would take a multimillion-dollar grant to get the business going in the United States," Galiano says.

"Skeletons used to be produced in the United States," he explains. "Manufacturers used dead prisoners and unclaimed bodies at hospitals, but this is no longer done. Today you'd have to convince people to donate their bodies for this purpose. Then you'd have to find someone who would do the job!" Galiano adds that the skeleton trade can be profitable. An average skeleton used to run \$500, he says, but would be worth as much as \$5,000 now.

—John-Bruce Shoemaker

*"It is life near the bone where it is sweetest."*

—Henry David Thoreau

## BONES OF BIHAR

India has long been the world's largest supplier of skeletons for medical research and training. But last summer the Indian government banned the trade, causing a severe shortage of skeletons worldwide. According to Dr. Dean Edell, editor of *The People's Medical Journal*, rumor has it that India put the lid on the industry because of "reports that children were being killed for their skulls. One re-

port said that fifteen hundred children per month were being kidnapped in Bihar and that their skulls were sent to Calcutta for export to twenty-three countries."

Henry Galiano, owner of Maxilla & Mandible, one of America's leading bone shops, says the rumors are just that. "India is a civilized country—they aren't just a bunch of crazed headhunters," he says. "What's happened is that they are embarrassed by the scandal and want to preserve their image.

It's a great loss. They were doing us a favor. Would you want to be operated on by some guy who's been playing with plastic for eight years? I wouldn't."

Obsolete though the industry may be, skeletons are in high demand today. Medical schools use the bones to teach prospective doctors important lessons about anatomy and surgical technique. Without real skeletons, plastic bones are the only option, but most doctors don't feel these are detailed

