films OF THE WEEK

THE DEVELOPMENT OF ELECTROCHEMISTRY. 16mm, color, sound, 19 min. This historical survey of the production of an electric current by chemical action covers the work of Alessandro Volta, Sir Humphrey Davy, Hans Christian Oersted, Michael Faraday, van't Hoff and others in Europe and America. Audience: high school, college, general. Purchase $195 from International Film Bureau, 332 S. Michigan Ave., Chicago, Ill. 60604.

THE MARTIAN INVESTIGATORS. 16mm, color, sound, 28 min. Presents a candid study of the principal investigators at the moment of discovery as the Mariner 6 and 7 spacecraft provide close-up pictures of the surface of Mars. Mariner 6 completed a 156-day journey through space on July 31, 1969, when it passed within 2,000 miles of the Martian surface. Mariner 7 passed by the planet at a similar distance on Aug. 5, 1969. In addition, to detailed photographs of Martian craters and the south polar "ice cap," the twin spacecraft provided new data on the pressure and chemical composition of the atmosphere and on atmospheric and surface temperatures. Audience: general. Purchase from National Audiovisual Center (GS), Washington, D. C. 20904 or free loan from NASA field libraries or National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Code FAD-2, Washington, D. C. 20546.

THE PROBLEM IS LIFE. 16mm, color, sound, 29 min. The population explosion is a major threat to India. Unless the birth rate is reduced, famine will erase all of the economic progress made in the past 20 years. With help from the United Nations, India has started a vast birth control program. This film takes us to an Indian village where a Family Planning worker makes person-to-person contact with the people. We follow a young doctor to the Family Planning Center where free contraceptive information is supplied and see a vasectomy, the method of contraception that has so far proved most successful in India. Audience: general. Purchase $260 or rental $11 from Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films, Dept. DF, 330 W. 42nd St., New York, N. Y. 10036.

SCIENCE LAB SAFETY—PART I. 16mm, color, sound, 19 min. Points out many steps which should be taken in certain high school science laboratory situations to prevent injury. Concentrates on safety in the physical science laboratory, but many aspects are also basic to safety in the biological science laboratory. Film shows that when a young person reaches junior high school he assumes a share of the responsibility for his own safety as well as the safety of others. This is especially true for the science laboratory, where the simplest exercises could be dangerous, and where one individual must depend upon another for his safety. Audience: high school. For purchase information, write Film Production Service, Virginia Department of Education, 523 E. Main St., Richmond, Va. 23219.

Listing is for readers' information of new 16mm and 8mm films on science, engineering, medicine and agriculture for professional, student and general audiences. For further information on purchase, rental or free loan, write to distributor or circle the appropriate number on the Reader's Service Card.

to the editor

Meteor/meteorite

In your article "Go, and catch a falling star" (SN: 1/17, p. 60) you state, ". . . meteorites flaming through the earth's atmosphere. . . ."

Meteorites do not flame through the earth's atmosphere. Meteors do and become meteorites only after they hit the earth.

Russell M. Harvourd
Chatham, N.Y.

(Strictly speaking a meteor doesn't become a meteorite until it strikes the ground. However, scientists commonly speak of a meteorite "passing across the sky" or being "decelerated by the atmosphere." Ed.)

First step

"Sulfur dioxide and guinea pigs" (SN: 1/17, p. 70) should be classed in the half-truth, or "what wasn't said" category of science.

It may be true that sulfur dioxide, like carbolic acid, kills or deactivates bacteria. But what about sulfur dioxide on particles, or mixed with other pollutants. There is certainly evidence that various pollutants have synergistic action on each other, and that the sun and weather also can change them, often for the worse.

Your magazine has an obligation to report the whole story, even in those brief abstracts, because so many people depend on you to interpret current research. I can just see what some uneducated newspapers could do with your inadequate coverage: "Air Pollution is Good for You!"

Paula Ayers
Washington, D. C.

(Dr. J. Wesley Clayton, director of Inhalation, Toxicology and Biochemistry Laboratories at Hazelton Laboratories, Inc., says the experiments with sulfur dioxide alone were the first step in a series in which other pollutants, such as sulfuric acid mist and particulates, will be examined to study any synergistic or antagonistic effects. Studies will also include the effects on primates. Ed.)

Prospector's perspective

A recent article (SN: 1/24, p. 89) on the possibility of dangers to humans because of radioactive contamination of soils, water and air from nuclear power plants has only contributed to the hysteria of the uninformed and made political propaganda for those on the left.

Since 1951, my associate and I have been extensively prospecting and exploring for uranium. Among other things, we use radioactive detection equipment, water sampling, etc. We have worked in dozens of areas, most of which consisted of many square miles where the radioactivity from uranium and its daughter products is as much as 10 times greater than what the AEC considers standard.

Water wells, springs, lakes, etc. tested for uranium in these areas have in a number of instances run several hundred times over what is considered normal.

Ranchers, sheepherders and others lived and raised families in these areas and drank this radioactive water. They also eat livestock, wildlife and fowl that have drunk these waters and grazed on grasses, plants and products that have absorbed much uranium.

Most of the inhabitants of these areas are quite healthy, robust and live to a ripe old age.

Ralph L. Schauss
Casper, Wyo.

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