

## films OF THE WEEK

**DRUGS, DRINKING AND DRIVING.** 16mm, color, sound, 18 min. Physiological and psychological tests demonstrate the effects that alcohol and drugs can have on driving reactions. Stresses that even the most "harmless" of drugs (aspirin, etc.) can have lethal effects when combined with even one drink. Audience: secondary, adult. Purchase \$240 from AIMS Instructional Media Service, Dept. SN, P. O. Box 1010, Hollywood, Calif. 90028.

**GENERAL CHEMISTRY LABORATORY TECHNIQUES.** Six films, available as Technicolor and Kodak cartridges as well as Super 8mm and 16mm reels, color, silent, 3½ min. each. Titles include: Introductory Laboratory Techniques; Filtration I: Gravity; Filtration II: Vacuum; Recrystallization I; Recrystallization II, and Quantitative Transfer. Audience: high school, college. Purchase \$22.95 in Super 8mm or \$19.95 in 16mm for individual films, sets of six \$129.40 in Super 8mm or \$161 in 16mm from Kalmia Co., Dept. SN, Concord, Mass. 01742.

**STOP OR GO: AN EXPERIMENT IN GENETICS.** 16mm, color, sound, 29 min. A documentation of an experiment which successfully analyzed the genetic code of a mutant virus. Dr. Norton Zinder and his colleagues at Rockefeller University are shown as they separate the mutant viruses from non-mutants, grow new generations of mutants, extract the mutants' genetic materials, and test whether the material will manufacture a certain protein known as the coat-protein. Audience: secondary, college, adult. Purchase \$240 or rental \$10 from Indiana University, Audio-Visual Center Dept. SN, Bloomington, Ind. 47401.

*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.*

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## to the editor

### Computers no panacea

I am happy to comment on the geophysics article "The unfathomed forces driving the earth's plates" (SN: 7/25, p. 74) as, being a regular reader of SCIENCE NEWS, I have often come across the perceptive articles of Kendrick Frazier.

The general exposition of the scientific problem is in my opinion excellent. It is clear and thoroughly intelligible as a technical article and probably will be read with benefit by many who are in adjacent fields of science. I think it is fair to say that the problem to which the article is addressed has not yet found a solution and might not find a clear-cut solution for some years to come. This poses a problem for a presentation such as Frazier's and I think he has handled it very well indeed. . . .

I am surprised that Frazier quotes the statement by Dr. McKenzie that the only way to solve these problems of geophysics is by large computers. A man as experienced as Frazier should know what every scientist knows, namely that no scientific problem is ever solved by computers. Problems are solved by human patience and imagination and nothing else. A computer comes in when it is a matter of getting quantitative information once a problem has been qualitatively understood. I think it is fair to say that the problem about which Frazier reports has not yet been solved. Nothing could be more useless in this state of affairs than a computer.

Walter M. Elsasser  
Institute for Fluid Dynamics  
and Applied Mathematics  
University of Maryland  
College Park, Md.

### Insect pathogens

Your article "Helping nature control insects" (SN: 9/5, p. 197) is a good statement on the possible use of viruses to kill insect pests. There is much that we do not know about insect pathogens and the role they may eventually play in the control of insects. It is certain that this will not be the best approach to all insect problems, but I feel that insect pathologists have obtained enough basic information about insect pathogens to suggest that some of the organisms could be developed as effective and highly efficient means of controlling insects.

In regard to the statement credited to me that we will have specific biological controls for one-half of the major insect pests within the next 10 years, I doubt seriously whether this

goal will be realized in this period of time. As I recall the discussion on the subject, I indicated that biological and other selective means of control may be available for use against or to supplement chemical means for about one-half of the 100 major insect pests. In making this appraisal I was thinking of not only strictly biological methods such as the use of pathogens, parasites and predators, but also the development of insect-resistant crop varieties, the use of attractants, the use of genetic approaches, cultural measures, and perhaps other techniques that might be used alone or integrated with the use of conventional type insecticides.

E. F. Knipling, Director  
U. S. Department of Agriculture  
Agricultural Research Service  
Entomology Research Div.  
Beltsville, Md.

### Shortening the time-lag

With limited space the article "Introduction of telepsychiatry" (SN: 8/1, p. 103) covers a good deal. However, "providing psychiatric therapy" is the least important function of the television connection between Massachusetts General Hospital and Bedford Veterans Administration Hospital, a hospital with about 800 patients who are in need of a variety of medical and surgical diagnoses and treatment. The interactive television is primarily a means of transmission of medical information in two directions. As such it is acting as a catalyst, leading to a shortening of lag-time between the discovery of medical information and its application.

Thomas F. Dwyer, M.D.  
Department of Psychiatry  
Harvard Medical School  
Boston, Mass.

### A pleasure

The SCIENCE NEWS piece "Glitch and antiglitch" (SN: 8/15, p. 136) on our pulsar work is very nice. Dietrick E. Thomsen did a fine job of adding to our press release and trimming off the parts intended for general newspapers. All of the article is correct.

It is always a pleasure to deal with SCIENCE NEWS, and I hope to continue to produce results of interest to you and to the public.

Dr. David D. Cudaback  
Radio Astronomy Laboratory  
University of California  
Berkeley, Calif.

Address communications to Editor,  
Science News, 1719 N Street, N.W.  
Washington, D. C. 20036