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Cover: Many people claim success in prospecting for water and other underground minerals by dowsing. To test such claims, a German physicist engineered a series of experiments—like the one shown here—aimed at “blinding” dowsers to external cues. While he interprets the findings of those tests as confirming the ability of certain individuals to divine underground aquifers, other scientists explain their reservations. (Photo: H.-D. Betz)

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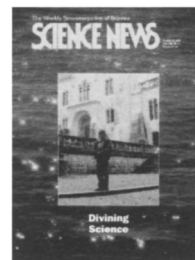
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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921. It gratefully accepts tax-deductible contributions and bequests to assist its efforts to increase the public understanding of science, with special emphasis on young people. More recently, it has included in its mission increasing scientific literacy among members of underrepresented groups. Through its Youth Programs it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair, the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse Science Scholarships, and publishes and distributes the *Directory of Student Science Training Programs for Precollege Students*.

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Letters

How much oxygen is too much?

“Ancient animals got a rise out of oxygen” (SN: 5/13/95, p.294) suggests that oxygen concentrations had been as high as 35 percent in the Carboniferous era. Hasn't there been some research that has shown that fire is so fierce at 25 percent that even the damp wood of a tropical rain forest will burn?

Hoff Stuart
Reston, Va.

There is no scientific consensus on the maximum possible oxygen concentration. Other factors, such as carbon dioxide concentrations and climate, may also play a role.

—R. Monastersky

ADD's link to delinquency

“Criminal Intellects” (SN: 4/15/95, p.232) reviews recent research on IQ and impulsivity as risk factors for delinquency yet fails to mention the extensive clinical and

experimental literature on attention deficit disorder (ADD).

Characterized by inattention and impulsivity, ADD is the most widely diagnosed childhood mental disorder in the United States today. It is currently considered a personality predisposition with prenatal and neonatal determinants, much in keeping with the studies cited. I point this out to emphasize the existence of treatments that can be quite effective with early diagnosis and intervention, a fact also absent from the article.

Eduardo Ysern
Caguas, Puerto Rico

The article contains a reference to a prior story about delinquency that includes data on its links to ADD (“Delinquent Developments,” SN: 5/1/93, p.282).

— B. Bower

Take your vitamins minus minerals

“Power Foods” (SN: 4/22/95, p.248) quotes Kedar Prasad as warning against multivita-

mins with high doses of iron, copper, and manganese, which create free radicals when they interact with vitamin C. However, I don't know what “loaded with iron, copper, and manganese” means.

Every multivitamin I am familiar with has vitamin C and minerals. Is he suggesting that one find a multivitamin without minerals or that one simply find one with a low dose of minerals?

Harold Kassel
Chicago, Ill.

Prasad recommends avoiding any multivitamin containing iron, copper, or manganese.

—T. Adler

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