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Cover: These containers hold nanocrystals of cadmium selenide suspended in a liquid. Exposed to ultraviolet light, the crystals fluoresce in different colors, depending on particle size. Such imaging is an important part of an effort to enhance the role of visualization in scientific research. (Photograph ©Felice Frankel)

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Letters

Northern exposure?

"Full report of nuclear test fallout released" (SN: 10/11/97, p. 231) contains a map showing the fallout patterns in the 1950s and 1960s. Neither those who generated the diagram nor those who wrote the article seemed the slightest bit aware of the fact that cities such as Calgary and Regina are quite close to areas where the highest fallout was measured.

It's nice to know our neighbors to the south are so concerned about our well-being.

Mark McBratney
Montreal, Canada

The National Cancer Institute study of fallout was mandated by U.S. law; therefore, its scope did not extend north of the U.S. border. Health officials on both sides of the border are aware that fallout from those tests traveled into Canada. At this time, however, there is no plan to

conduct a similar study for Canadian residents, says Dorothy Meyerhof, a division chief in the Radiation Protection Bureau of Health Canada in Ottawa. A preliminary review of health data for the areas of Canada likely to be affected revealed thyroid cancer rates at or below the national average, she adds.

—S. Perkins

Cultural mix and self-enhancement

Does the study described in "My Culture, My Self" (SN: 10/18/97, p. 248) account for the "sources" of the populations? In contrast to the U.S. population, the Japanese people are indigenous. The United States blends many cultures, and the struggles immigrants went through are also culture-bending.

Carmen Lorenz
Walla Walla, Wash.

Further studies are needed to examine the extent to which various U.S. populations engage in self-enhancement. Cultural psychologists suspect that self-enhancement repre-

sents a core mental tactic of most native U.S. citizens, regardless of their ethnic background.

—B. Bower

Plastics and health

Your report on a study measuring bisphenol A (BPA) release from polycarbonate under conditions so severe that polycarbonate hydrolysis was observed ("Lacing food with an estrogen mimic," SN: 10/18/97, p. 255) neglects to quote the study's most relevant implication for human health: "When whole polycarbonate baby bottles were tested by using typical fill conditions and less severe, normal use conditions, neither BPA migration nor hydrolysis was observed (limit of detection was 2 ng/ml [nanograms per milliliter])." This detection limit is equivalent to 2 parts per billion in foods or beverages.

Hugh Patrick Toner
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