

Do You Know?

Cottontail rabbits, which damage very many young orchard trees and shrubs each winter, are controlled by repellent mixtures applied to the bark, buds and shoots.

Racing boats, with hydrofoils under their hulls that lift them well out of the water when traveling fast, are capable of great speed; the hydrofoils are wing-like parts that project downward and backward.

America has *submarines* that can stay under water for weeks by use of the German "schnorkel" breathing tube; an attempt now is being made to generate oxygen from hydrogen peroxide so that the breathing tube will not be needed.

Printing and dry cleaning plants are decreasing operating costs by salvaging solvent vapors that have escaped into the air by the use of activated *carbon*; they are recovered by passing the plant air through the carbon which absorbs the vapors.

The dramatic story
behind Atomic Fission

THE STRANGE STORY OF THE QUANTUM

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By BANESH HOFFMANN

Dept. of Math., Queens College, New York

If you are intrigued by the mysteries surrounding the discovery of atomic fission, you will here glimpse the meaning of the ideas underlying the "new physics" and its atomic implications. Here is told and explained the whole chain of stirring events that led to this extraordinary discovery, and the human drama behind it.

"There will be many stirred by the importance of the atom, who have never had much hope of understanding, who will be able to read this story."—WATSON DAVIS, Director, *Science Service*.

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NUTRITION

Butter Versus Margarine

Height and weight gains and general health of children found about the same in two-year study, whether margarine or butter is table fat.

► CHILDREN grow as well on margarine as on butter, Drs. Harry Leichter, George Eisenberg and Anton J. Carlson of Chicago report in the *Journal of the American Medical Association* (Feb. 7).

The report, from the University of Illinois College of Medicine department of pediatrics, is of a study aided by a grant from the National Association of Margarine Manufacturers. Terms of the grant provided that findings of the study could be published regardless of results.

Unlike most studies of the relative merits of butter and margarine, human children instead of laboratory rats were the subjects.

The children ranged in age from three to 17 years and were orphans or half-orphans living in two different institutions. Those in one institution got only margarine, from vegetable fats and fortified with vitamin A, to spread on bread, and as the fat used on vegetables, in pastry and for frying. Butter was the only fat used for these purposes in the other institution.

The study went on for two years, during which time more than 200 records were accumulated. These included reports on children's health, monthly height and weight records, and red blood cell counts and hemoglobin determinations made at the beginning of the study and again one year later. Because some children stayed in the institutions a short time, all records for those studied less than six months were discarded. This left 160 records in the margarine group and 107 in the butter group.

At the end of two years, the average yearly gain in weight for boys getting margarine was 6.7 pounds, while that for boys getting butter was 8.1 pounds. The difference is not statistically significant, the scientists point out. Girls on margarine had a yearly average gain of 8.2 pounds, those on butter 6.3 pounds.

Yearly average gain in height for boys on margarine was 2.2 inches, for those on butter it was 1.6 inches. The figures for girls were 2.2 on margarine, 0.9 on butter.

The health of the children was "uni-

formly good so far as serious illness is concerned, regardless of whether margarine or butter was the source of the greater part of the fat in the diet," the scientists report.

"If there is a growth factor present in butter which is not present in margarine, there is no evidence in the present study that such a factor plays any important part in the growth of children as determined by increases in height and weight," they state.

"Margarine is a good source of table fat in growing children, as determined by a two-year study. Children readily accept margarine as a table spread when it is colored and served in pats."

Science News Letter, February 14, 1948

GENERAL SCIENCE

Scholarship Offered for Teachers of Lip Reading

► A NEW kind of scholarship is being offered to prospective teachers of lip reading by the American Hearing Society, trustee of the Kenfield Memorial Fund.

Honoring Miss Coralie N. Kenfield of San Francisco, the scholarship provides \$100 for a normal training course at any institution acceptable to the Teachers' Committee of the American Hearing Society.

Applicants must have ability to read lips, have personal characteristics necessary for successful teaching and meet certain educational requirements.

Science News Letter, February 14, 1948

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