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COVER: Recent research suggests that the traditional understanding of stress reactions may be somewhat misleading. Psychological, as opposed to physiological, factors may be more important than has been previously recognized. See p. 356.

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MAY 31, 1975

LETTERS

IUD cover—II

I was most surprised to read the adverse responses to the IUD cover (4/5/75) by Ann Lunsford in recent letters to the editor. I fail to see anything insulting or degrading about it. I take these devices as seriously as anyone else—perhaps more so, being a woman of childbearing age with a certain vested interest. A little graphic imagination does not imply a frivolous attitude toward the subject.

When women have gotten so incredibly self-absorbed and supersensitive that they take umbrage at practically every innocent remark (verbal, visual, or otherwise), I am embarrassed to be identified as part of that group.

I was quite impressed with the cover, and in fact mentioned it to several friends. It was clever, imaginative, and it drew attention to the feature article—and isn't that what a cover graphic is for?

Toni L. Williams
University Park, Pa.

Ozone for drinking water

The Environmental Protection Agency's belief that chlorination remains the single most effective means of water purification (SN: 4/26/75, p. 269) is unjustified. A new, more efficient technology, far superior to chlorination in terms of environmental and economic benefits, is now available. The new method, designed by Telecommunications Industries, Inc., uses ozone (O₃) to rapidly oxidize impurities in water and ultrasonic frequencies to physically break them down so as to expose more surface area, thereby increasing the rate of oxidation. As a result, impure water flows through the system at a much faster rate, meaning that ozone-ultrasonic plants need only to occupy one-fifth the amount of land required by conventional chlorination plants of comparable output. Of more importance is the fact that unlike chlorine, ozone is very unstable and will not remain in the purified water as a residue for long, since it gradually decomposes into oxygen. As for the system's purifying ability, no regrowth of microorganisms has been observed in ozone-ultrasonic treated water even after an incubation period of 72 hours.

The advantages of ozone-ultrasonic purification are even more apparent when viewed in light of the drawbacks to chlorination. Economically, chlorine is a problem because it is expensive and in short supply, and

because it is fairly poisonous, more elaborate mechanisms are needed for its transport and storage. Environmentally, chlorine and its byproducts in chlorination pose serious problems because considerable amounts accumulate in lakes and reservoirs, and thus contaminate our drinking water, as evidenced in New Orleans and other cities.

The EPA has been made aware of this new technology, and was supposed to have considered the construction of a pilot plant at Indianatown, Fla. Apparently, due to the influence of industry lobbyists or EPA incompetence, the agency has instead decided to support the conventional, polluting chlorination process. Such a policy can only be detrimental. Americans will continue to consume more carbon tetrachloride, chloroform, vinyl chloride, and other carcinogens in their water every day. If we cannot deal successfully with this simple problem of water purification, how can we expect to handle more complex problems involving the nation's future water supply? We soon may have a national program of water rationing.

Jerome Liebelson
Spring Valley, N.Y.

Russell Train states that chlorination remains the single most effective method of preventing serious water-borne bacterial diseases such as typhoid and cholera. Believe I would take either of these maladies over cancer. Reckon Mr. Train is familiar with ozone treatment?

Luther W. McGinty
Chattanooga, Tenn.

Anthropological film center

We would like to call your attention to a few inaccuracies in "Filming Fading Faces" (SN: 5/17/75, p. 326). First, the support for the National Anthropological Film Center at the Smithsonian comes from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the National Institutes of Health, not the National Science Foundation. Second, it was Dr. Norman Miller, not Dr. Richard Sorenson, who utilized the expertise of the American Universities Field Staff Correspondents and organized the filming of all five cultures. Third, the AUFS, whose films were premiered at the Smithsonian, employs a group of 15 (not 28) journalists and former professors to report from various parts of the world.

Dr. Alan W. Horton, Executive Director
American Universities Field Staff
Hanover, N.H.

Dr. E. Richard Sorenson, Director
National Anthropological Film Center
Smithsonian Institution
Washington, D.C.

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