ASK THE SCIENTIST

If you have a question to ask the scientists, mail it to the New York Press Association, The Castle, Syracuse, 10, New York. The Science Board of the Radio Workshop at Syracuse University will answer each week in the Andover News those questions considered most interesting and timely.

Question 1. What is the lethal gas used to execute prisoners in some states?

ANSWER. Hydrocyanic acid gas is now being used to execute prisoners in eight of our states as a method of capital punishment. The prisoner becomes unconscious with the first breath and death follows rapidly.

Carbon monoxide might also be used and has been recommended by some because it is odorless and acts almost as quickly. Any gas which does not contain sufficient oxygen to support life would be lethal. The states using hydrocyanic acid gas for capital punishment are Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, North Carolina, Wyoming, California, Montana, and Oregon.—Dr. Aden King, chemist.

Question 2. Do seals live in the tropics?

ANSWER. Yes, quite a number of species live in the tropics. One of our rarest species is found on the Midway Islands and Hawaii, and has been protected by law. They are monk seal. They differ from other Pacific seals in that they do not have any claws on their feet. — Dr. Verlus Lindeman, zoologist.

Question 3. Is athletic ability inherited?

ANSWER. Decidedly so, because athletic ability is in terms of muscular coordination and physical features which are definitely inherited. If the person who asked this question was a football player, his son has a much better chance of being a football player than he would have if his father had not been a strong, husky individual.—Dr. Ernest Reed, geneticist.

Question 4. Are large gas tanks above ground a menace to surrounding property? Suppose that lightning struck them. Would they explode?

ANSWER. Modern gasoline tanks are so constructed and ventilated that there is practically no danger of a fire starting from lightning. Even if a fire starts, the tank should not explode.—Dr. Albert L. Elder, chemist.

Question 5. How were the colors developed on the rocks of the Grand Canyon? Are they mineral or something else?

ANSWER. Most of the color of the rocks of the Grand Canyon is due to iron compounds which usually are some shade of yellow, brown or red. The steep walls of the gorge permit colors to run from the place where they form down over lower layers. In this way a gray limestone has been so stained with red that it generally has been referred to as the red wall limestone.

Most of the colors in the Grand Canyon are viewed at a distance and therefore through the bluish or purplish haze in the air. When the color of the haze, the darkness of the shadows, and the red and brown of the rocks are all blended we see the patchwork of colors as a pleasing combination.

The color is only on the outside of the rocks. If we would peel off a foot thick layer from the walls of the Grand Canyon, the gorge would look very different except for the haze.—Dr. Earl Apfel, geologist.

Question 6. Can a submarine reach the greatest depth in the ocean?

ANSWER. Some submarines may reach the greatest depth in the ocean, but I am quite certain such submarines never come up again. If the submarine went down at one of the deeper points in the ocean, the pressure on the outside would become so great as to open the seams and flood the ship. — Dr. William R. Frederickson, physicist.

Question 7. Is it true that a person struggling in the water to prevent drowning will come to the surface three times before finally going down?

ANSWER. No, it depends upon the individual. A person who can keep calm and can come up to take a breath and do down again can continue to do this until he becomes fatigued. On the other hand, if he takes water into his lungs the first time, he probably will not come up again. — Dr. Verlus Lindeman, physiologist.

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Births

July 27—To Mr. and Mrs. Edward Crance, Wellsville, a daughter.

July 26—To Mr. and Mrs. Roland Gallman, Angelica, a son.

July 27—To Mr. and Mrs. Charles McCann, Wellsville, a daughter.

July 18—To Mr. and Mrs. Charles Griffin of Obi, a daughter.

July 22—To Mr. and Mrs. Frank DeAngelo, Wellsville, a son.

July 26—To Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Burrows, Wellsville, a daughter.

July 27—To Mr. and Mrs. Sam Grossman, Wellsville, a daughter.

July 26—To Mr. and Mrs. Orrin Ward, Friendship, a son.

July 27—To Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Green, Wellsville, a son.

July 27—To Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wightman, Wellsville, a son.

Marriages

MARRIAGES—

July 28—Miss Marian E. Brandes, Wellsville, to Richard I. Graves of Shongo.

July 27—Miss Betty I. Bliss of Troupsburg to Rev. Burt R. Graves of Belmont.

July 20—Mrs. Ellen A. Frederickson, Cuba, to Henry C. Stickel, Portville.

July 16—Miss Maxine Clayson, Cuba, to Clarence J. Remillard of Rochester.

July 20—Miss Gertrude E. Dobbins of Kendall to Karney C. Cochran of Wellsville.

July 26 — Miss Iona Jeanne Hackett and Claude L. Guilford, both of Friendship.

July 27 — Miss Marion M. Reynolds, daughter of Mrs. Bertha Renyolds of Scio to Dr. Lewis Williams of Martinsville, Ind.

Deaths

Charles A. Clark, 67, of Scio, July 28. Surviving are a son and several nieces and nephews.

Frances Carol McQueeney, 10-year-old daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Francis McQueeney, Bolivar, July 17. The child was struck by a car while riding a bicycle that day. Besides her parents she leaves a brother.

Harry Howard Goodrich, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry H. Goodrich, Bolivar, July 22nd.

Mrs. Jessie M. Cozzi, 49, lifelong resident of Scio, July 24, in Potter County Memorial hospital. She leaves her husband, three sons, two daughters, four grandchildren, a brother and three sisters.

Mrs. Abbigail Green Clair, 85, Belmont, July 24. She is survived by her husband, a son, two daughters, a stepson, 19 grandchildren and 14 great-grandchildren.

We are aware that the atomic bomb has presented new problems, but we can't get them into focus.

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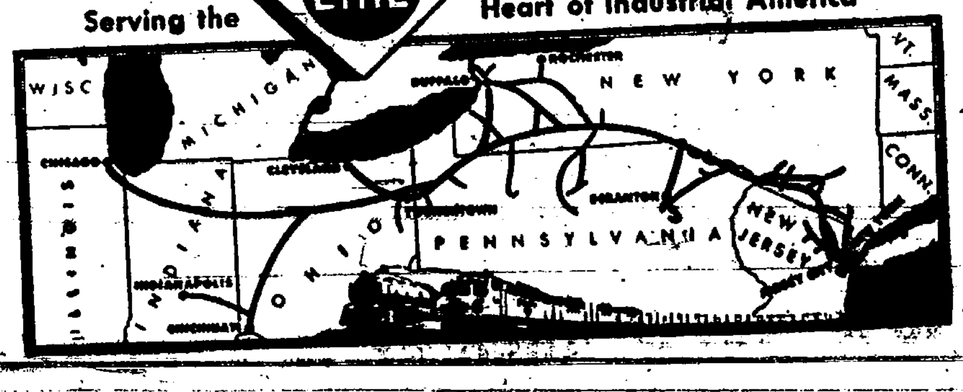
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