LETTERS

EDITORIAL
The Fate of School Science: F. Press

ARTICLES
Nonlinear Optics and Spectroscopy: N. Bloembergen

The Alu Family of Dispersed Repetitive Sequences: C. W. Schmid and W. R. Jelinek

The International Breeder's Rights System and Crop Plant Innovation: J. H. Barton

NEWS AND COMMENT
Boom and Bust in Biotechnology

Gambling on Interferon

Shaky Firms Make Poor Sponsors

Researcher Denied Future U.S. Funds

Laser Wars on Capitol Hill

Reagan Proposes to Restructure Soviet Forces

Briefing: Revised Animal Bill Under Scrutiny; NRC Gains a Third Reagan Appointee; Block Ends Checks on USDA Peer Reviewers; DOD May Have to Pay Its Way on the Shuttle

RESEARCH NEWS
In Search of the Magnetic Monopole

LEP Detector Competition Opens at CERN

Molecules Come to Darwin's Aid

AAAS NEWS
Science 81 Wins Major Award: J. L. Teramani; Moves...; AAAS Detroit Meeting; AAAS Life Insurance Program Makes Special Offer; New Data Show How Changes in Science Labor Force: M. Veitch and E. L. Babco; AAAS Travelers; Meeting to Assess Use of Genetics in Management of Wild Populations; Pacific Division Program Features Creationism, Medfly, and Risk Analysis; AAAS Annual Elections: Preliminary Announcement; R & D Colloquium

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REPORTS


Tephra from the 1979 Soufriere Explosive Eruption: H. Sigurdsson ........ 1106


Meteorological Analysis of the Eruption of Soufriere in April 1979: S. Barr and J. L. Heffter ......................... 1109

Skirt Clouds Associated with the Soufriere Eruption of 17 April 1979: S. Barr ........ 1111

Airborne Lidar Measurements of the Soufriere Eruption of 17 April 1979: W. H. Fuller, Jr., S. Sokol, W. H. Hunt ............... 1113

Stratospheric Aerosol Effects from Soufriere Volcano as Measured by the SAGE Satellite System: M. P. McCormick et al. ........ 1115

Fine Particles in the Soufriere Eruption Plume: D. C. Woods and R. L. Chuan ........ 1118

Aerosols from the Soufriere Eruption Plume of 17 April 1979: W. A. Sedlacek et al. .................. 1119

Volcanic Gases in the April 1979 Soufriere Eruption: D. R. Cronn and W. Nutmagul ........................................ 1121

Stratospheric Nitrogen Dioxide in the Vicinity of Soufriere, St. Vincent: G. J. Romick, D. G. Murcray, W. J. Williams ................ 1123

Deformation Studies on Soufriere, St. Vincent, Between 1977 and 1981: R. S. Fiske and J. B. Shepherd ........ 1125

Spherical Crystallization: Direct Spherical Agglomeration of Salicylic Acid Crystals During Crystallization: Y. Kawashima, M. Okumura, H. Takenaka ........................................ 1127

Calcium Carbonate Hexahydrate from Organic-Rich Sediments of the Antarctic Shelf: Precursors of Glendonites: E. Suess et al. ........ 1128

Stable-Carbon Isotope Ratios as a Measure of Marine Versus Terrestrial Protein in Ancient Diets: B. S. Chisholm, D. E. Nelson, H. P. Schwarz ........ 1131

Suppressor T Lymphocytes Control the Development of Primary Skin Cancers in Ultraviolet-Irradiated Mice: M. S. Fisher and M. L. Kripke ........ 1133

Biplexiform Cells: Ganglion Cells of the Primate Retina That Contact Photoreceptors: A. P. Mariani ........................................ 1134

Isolation of Human Oncogene Sequences (v-fes Homolog) from a Cosmid Library: J. Groffen et al. ........... 1136

Variables on Scatterplots Look More Highly Correlated When the Scales Are Increased: W. S. Cleveland, P. Diaconis, R. McGill .............. 1138


COVER

Tier of smooth skirt clouds rings eruption column (about 2 kilometers in diameter) from Soufriere Volcano, St. Vincent, West Indies, 17 April 1979. The turbulent column, produced by the most powerful explosion of the 1979 activity, was observed to rise at an average velocity of 50 meters per second to an altitude of about 18 to 20 kilometers. The rising column apparently entrained and deformed preexisting subhorizontal layers of moist and less-moist air from lower altitudes and carried them to levels where the moist layers condensed to form the visible skirt clouds. See page 1105. [Photographed by K. C. Rowley, University of West Indies, from a low-flying aircraft piloted by Duncan Richardson]