

Survey of Contemporary Toxicology, Vol. 1, by A.T. Tu (Ed.), John Wiley and Sons, New York, 1981, \$45, 357 pp.

This is one of the most interesting texts that I have reviewed recently — primarily because it is an area of extreme importance to the hazardous materials field, also because it is one in which I am particularly ill-read.

In putting together the book, the editor attempted (and I think succeeded) in presenting toxicology in a logical, comprehensible and easily understandable format. He has included, in the first volume, seven chapters, each authored by a different expert in the field. The chapter titles are: (1) Industrial toxicology, (2) Chemical pollutants in water, (3) Food additive technology, (4) Foodborne diseases, (5) Bacterial toxins, (6) Plant toxins, (7) Marine toxins.

The first two chapters will be of most interest to readers of this journal. Montgomery and Reinhardt of DuPont, in 81 pages (they could have used a whole book), cover the importance and impact of industrial hazards. Topics they discuss include monitoring (the focus was on air sampling), routes of entry (of hazardous chemicals into the body, via the skin and lungs), general physiological mechanisms of irritants, asphyxiants, anesthetics and narcotics, systemic poisons and sensitizers, toxicity data and exposure limits, physical and biologic factors, such as hot and cold environments, noise and radiant energy and finally, current topics including chemicals as a cause of cancer (there is no more “current” topic), short-term tests such as carcinogenic-mutagen screens, teratogenic and reproductive effects, metabolism and pharmacokinetics and development of standards and limit values.

The second chapter by Phillips of Stanford University, which takes up the next 61 pages, covers the contaminants of aquatic systems, kinds, sources, concentration and effects of chemical pollutants, effects on the aquatic system organisms and human health. In the latter part of the chapter, effects on human health, the author discusses three very current problems caused by chemicals: nitrates, mercury and carcinogens in water supplies.

Just these two chapters make the book worthwhile and I commend it to the readers of this review.

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Who's Poisoning America: Corporate Polluters and their Victims in the Chemical Age, Ralph Nader, Ronald Brownstein and John Richard (Eds.), Sierra Club Books, San Francisco, 1981, 369 pp., \$12.95.

The serious nature and extent of hazardous waste disposal in what today is considered a careless or irresponsible manner has been recognized by Congress in the RCRA Act of 1976 and the “superfund” Act of December 1980. Implementation of these two laws has barely begun, and the effects of their legal status will not be clear, from the practical viewpoint, for some time. Meanwhile, Ralph Nader and his associates feel the need for a review of seven situations to illustrate the concern which, at some local levels, approaches hysteria.