

Multimedia Review VIDEO/DVD

raised bed gardens to rooftop gardens. The central message is that involving students in planning and planting a garden can have a positive emotional and educational impact. The video does not explain the planting and growing process, although there are Web sites, telephone numbers, and other information sources listed on the video's screen credits and on the video packaging. When teachers are ready to begin a gardening project, students can watch this video for inspiration and motivation. The teacher's guide is helpful, but teachers will need much more practical information on gardening basics in order to replicate these projects.—*Kay Harrison, Page St. Elementary School, Troy, NC*

Language

Great Books: Dante's Inferno. videocassette.

color. approx. 26 min. (closed captioned).

with tchr's. guide. Discovery Channel

School. 2003. ISBN 1-58738-4191. \$49.95.

Gr 9-12—The special effects in this video will hold the attention of teenagers as actor Christian Slater narrates this excellent, thought-provoking video about this classic. University professors, authors, and leaders from religious communities add their comments. Dominant themes in the video reflect major themes in Dante's work. Sin is the result of human choice and, in order to choose the path of righteousness, one must first face the nature of evil. The video shows how both of these themes relate to Dante's *Inferno*. Although the scholars mention that The Bible served as the source for many of Dante's ideas, they also point out that much of what Dante presents is also based on human nature. Dante's personal journey into the depths of his soul represents the universal journey of every man's life. So powerful is Dante's writing, that his model of hell has become widely accepted by the Western world. Translator Robert Pinsky gives viewers the final thoughtful words, "Dante wrote about life, about the center of living and how life must end. Life takes its petty turns and is in the context of eternity on either side of it. Dante's journey is one toward life and hope after having faced the evils of man's soul."—*Suzanne Goodman, Park High School, Livingston, MT*

Science

Blue and White in Red Square. videocassette. color. 1 hr. Alden Films. 2003. \$49.95.

Gr 7 Up—In the summer of 1998, the Israeli Philharmonic Youth Orchestra traveled to Moscow to perform with youth orchestras from many other countries. It was a significant trip for the Israelis, since most of its members were either born in Russia or had relatives who had emigrated from Russia to

Israel. Interviews with orchestra members, the conductor, and those who traveled with them indicate that the planning and practicing for this event had been quite overwhelming. Once the young musicians arrive in Moscow, the documentary focuses on the architecture of the city and the music. Classical music plays as cameras pan the city with its fabulous onion domed architecture. Each day of the trip is documented with rehearsals, side trips, and small group performances. Finally the day of the international youth concert in Red Square arrives. Maestro Valerie Gergeyev, a well-known classical conductor, runs through several pieces with the international group of almost 1000 and selects the difficult piece, "Pictures at an Exhibition" by Mussorgsky. Conductors from the Vancouver and the Philadelphia youth orchestras describe the importance of this concert. The film ends with Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture" complete with canon fire and fireworks and joy on the faces of all the participants for having participated in this memorable concert. Since the film is predominantly in Hebrew with English subtitles, which occasionally have misspelled words, viewers must have a strong interest in the subject matter to stay focused. Music teachers might want to show this video to student orchestra groups to demonstrate how hard work pays off.—*Pat Bender, The Shipley School, Bryn Mawr, PA*

Pets

All By Myself: Taking Care of My Pet.

videocassette. color. 30 min. Prod. by Ladybug Prods. Dist. by All By Myself. 2003.

ISBN 0-9715434-5-3. \$14.95.

PreS-Gr 1—This second entry in the series, though not as well-organized and engaging as the first (*Getting Dressed*, Aug. 2003, p. 62), follows the encouraging and empowering format of showing young children completing tasks on their own. This time the focus is on pets. Buddy, the animated ladybug hosts as before, and is accompanied by his own pet, "Squeaky the Pufferdoodle." Live-action segments feature kids ages three to eight playing with their pets, giving them food and water, brushing them, and doing other special things. A variety of animals are included, from cats and dogs to fish and even a chameleon. A final informational segment features a veterinarian discussing the importance of regular check-ups and safety with strange pets. Unfortunately, the last several minutes are taken up with an unfunny "Bloopers" section, which seems nothing more than an effort to use all available footage. Still, this program touches on the basics of pet care, and kids will enjoy seeing their peers taking charge and heeding Buddy's motto, "You can do it! Just stick to it!"—*Kathleen Kelly MacMillan, Maryland School for the Deaf, Columbia*

Science

Astronomy Series. 4 videocassettes or 4 DVDs. color. 20 min. ea. (closed captioned). with tchr's. guide. Visual Learning Co. 2003. ISBN 58234-054-7. videocassette: \$299 ser., \$89.95 ea.; DVD: \$299 ser. Includes: *Earth, Sun and Moon; The Inner Planets; The Outer Planets; The Amazing Universe.*

Gr 5-8—The series emphasizes structured lessons for traditional science pedagogy. Each video features an introduction, a summation after the facts are presented, and fill-in-the-blank questions posed onscreen at the end. Content is delivered with clear examples and well-explained and illustrated facts. *Earth, Sun and Moon* covers planet shape, rotation, and revolution around the sun. Animated sequences showing the phases of the moon are easy to understand. *The Inner Planets* describes the nebular hypothesis, the layout of the solar system, and the characteristics of Mercury, Venus, Earth and Mars with satellite photos and telescope views. Animations clearly show planet orbits. *The Outer Planets* takes us on an animated trip to Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Pluto where features are described with NASA and Hubble telescope images. Information on the Milky Way and asteroids is included. *The Amazing Universe* gives more information about our galaxy and others in our solar system. NASA footage of our sun explains the life of a star, sunspots, and solar flares. Also covered are constellations, other planet moons, nebulae, white dwarves, giant and neutron stars and supernova. With the flavor of a game show, the audience gets to guess upcoming information with interspersed "You Decide?" questions, where shutting off the video and allowing some discussion or class interaction might be useful. While the content is accurate, the presentation is not very exciting. Astronomers are not interviewed, and the emphasis is on delivery of facts. Sound effects and music are included infrequently to punctuate the graphic text dividers of the material. Viewers are left wishing for a night of star gazing to get really excited about astronomy.—*Joan Karasick, Greenwich High School, CT*

Empty Oceans, Empty Nets. videocassette.

color. 55 min. (closed captioned). Prod. by

Habitat Media. Dist. by Bullfrog Films.

2002, 2003 release. ISBN 1-56029-977-0.

\$250 (Rental: \$85).

Gr 9 Up—Billions of people depend upon ocean fish for their entire supply of protein. But the fish species across the world's oceans are in trouble. With superb visuals and splendid narration by Peter Coyote, the video examines the causes of over fishing and the increasing demand for fish, and offers examples of viable solutions that provide sustainable fish populations. Fishers, both men and women, discuss their livelihood and the challenges of finding fish. Scientists and en-

Environmentalists offer facts and opinions. Four parts of the globe are examined and illustrate that today's fishing boats sail worldwide in search of a profitable catch. Ships trawl the Atlantic at Georges Bank and the Flemish Cap with 60 miles of baited hooks attempting to catch swordfish. International fleets fish the continental shelf of the Canary Islands. The blue fin tuna industry in Sicily is yet another area near collapse. An example of productive, rebounding fishing ground is the Gulf of Alaska. The use of fishing permits and quotas have allowed the fish to reach healthy sizes, to reproduce, and to regenerate the waters. This type of management plan also has been used with Pacific salmon and, if applied to fisheries across the globe, could bring about global sustainable fishing. An important part of this equation is educated consumers and merchants who insist upon fish from sustainable fisheries. The stunning visuals of fish in the oceans and the sometimes horrifying footage of catching those same fish, together with the factual information make this video a must have for all library environmental collections.—*Patricia Ann Owens, Wabush Valley College, Mt. Carmel, IL*

Lava Flows and Lava Tubes. videocassette or DVD. 42 min. Volcano Video Prods. 2003. videocassette, ISBN 1-887912-90-8: \$22.95; DVD, ISBN 1-887912-91-6: \$29.95.

Gr 9 Up—Dr. Ken Hon, volcanologist, photographer, producer and narrator of this exciting program, takes us up very close to all kinds of lava flows and formations. The wealth of current, in-depth information is well organized and explained. Two kinds of lava flows, known as aa and pahoehoe, are shown in their current active state in Hawaii and at ancient sites in Idaho, New Mexico, and Washington. Also included are examples of unusual formations such as slabby and inflated pahoehoe, columnar joints, tree molds, hornitoes, and pillow lava. Undersea lava flows are also briefly explained. Good use of time-lapse and aerial photography helps to make the process understandable. Lava viscosity and stress are also described in detail to explain which kind of lava will be formed under what conditions. Vents, fissure rows, spatter ramparts, and fountains are briefly described with reference to recent eruptions of Mount Etna in Italy. The last half of the production explains lava tubes, underground channels, and caves formed by moving molten rock. Caves formed from ancient lava flows are shown open to visitors and reveal intricate formations. Music and the incredible sound of lava flow enhance the presentation. People assumed to be volcanologists are shown in close vicinity to active lava flows, appearing to walk on cooled crusts atop hot flowing lava in caves below. There are no safety warnings for those who might visit volcano sites. A bonus included with this program is the 30-minute award-

winning *Kilauea: Close Up of an Active Volcano*. Covering the physical geography of the Hawaiian Islands and volcano history, it is a good complement to Dr. Hon's more technical information. Together these programs offer unique photography and the volcanology expertise of Dr. Hon's team that should be useful to students researching current ideas about how lava flows move, change, and create lava tubes.—*Joan Karasick, Greenwich High School, CT*

Seeds in Motion (2nd ed.). videocassette. color. 14 min. with teacher's guide. Pyramid. 2002, 2003 release. ISBN 1-55981-800-X. \$129.

Gr 4-6—There are many ways in which plants spread their seeds. This video addresses the most common of these as it explores ways in which plants propagate themselves. Through excellent live-action, close-up, and time-lapse photography, viewers learn about plant adaptations to spread seeds. These include using wind and water, hitchhiking, exploiting their role in the food chain, and using adaptations that violently expel seeds so that they may be scattered. Each method is demonstrated using fairly common plants most children will recognize. Reasons why seeds may fail to germinate are also explored. This has all the earmarks of those classic educational films we all remember watching as children. The female narrator provides the facts in a measured, calm, and precise manner. There's no snappy music or fancy graphics, just good solid information presented clearly. There is, however, one flaw. Maple trees, with their winged seeds, are identified as oaks. Without that error, this would be a solid educational video that would merit a place in classrooms.—*Teresa Bateman, Brigadoon Elementary School, Federal Way, WA*

Sign Language

Baby See 'n Sign II. videocassette. color. 45 min. Prod. by Kronz Kids Prods. Dist. by AV Café. 2001, 2003 release. \$14.99.

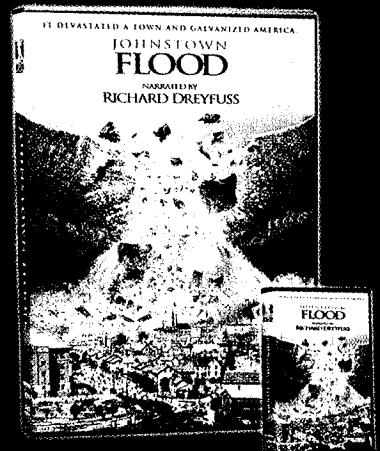
Pre-S—This second volume in the series repeats the format that made the first such a success: it introduces each concept with pictures and the English word spoken and on the screen, and then demonstrates the sign three times, alternated with various crisp still pictures and video illustrating the concept. One of the demonstrations of the sign is always in slow motion, which parents will appreciate. This volume lacks the parent information section which made the first video such a valuable asset, but it makes up for this by including more than 100 well-chosen signs in eight child-friendly categories: Familiar Faces and Places, Outdoors, Zoo Friends, Party Time, My Body, Bath Time, Nighty-Night, and Manners. Each segment features a variety of people of various ages and ethnic

From the makers of the award-winning
Civil War Life Series

JOHNSTOWN FLOOD

NARRATED BY
RICHARD DREYFUSS

"A fascinating look
at a national disaster
and its aftermath."
—*Video Store Magazine*



May 31, 1889.

Johnstown, Pennsylvania.
2,209 killed.

Thousands left homeless.
Countless bodies never found.

The worst flood disaster
in the nation's history.

Why did it happen?

Narrated by Academy Award winner
Richard Dreyfuss.

Academy Award® is a registered trademark and service mark
of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.

DVD

Suggested Retail Price: \$27.95

Catalog Number: 15592

ISBN#: 1-59218-014-0

Running Time: 84 Minutes

Dolby® Digital 2.0 and 5.1 Surround

Anamorphic Widescreen

Closed-Captioned

VHS

Suggested Retail Price: \$24.95

Catalog Number: 15603

ISBN#: 1-59218-015-9

Running Time: 84 Minutes

Hi-Fi Stereo

Widescreen Letterboxed

Closed-Captioned

Contact your distributor
or call 1.888.258.5164

Inecom

www.JohnstownFlood.com

Copyright © 2003 Inecom Entertainment Company