

ET CETERA

Slouch By Jim Earle



"Fifteen? You really have on fifteen layers of underwear?"

Vaccine for V.D. undergoes tests

Associated Press

STANFORD, Calif. — An experimental vaccine that could prevent gonorrhea has been developed from a bioengineered protein and tests on volunteers will begin next year, researchers announced.

The vaccine is made from a cloned protein fragment that appears to produce a protective immune barrier against a broad range of gonorrhea-causing bacteria, said Dr. Gary Schoolnik of the Stanford University School of Medicine.

In laboratory studies, the vaccine blocked gonococcal bacteria from infecting human cells with the disease that afflicts more than one million Americans annually, Schoolnik said Tuesday. Tests on volunteers will begin within the next year.

"If the vaccine for gonorrhea is successful, it would be fantastic," Dr. Mary Guinan of the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta said Wednesday. We could make a significant contribution to public health by preventing the disease instead of just treating it after people get it."

The report by Schoolnik will appear in the February issue of the "Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences."

Gonorrhea, the most communicable disease for which records are kept in the United States, spreads through sexual contact and can produce severe complications, including infertility in women, meningitis, arthritis and eye disease for the children of afflicted mothers.

Union Carbide admits to 83 chemical leaks

Associated Press

CHARLESTON, W.Va. — Union Carbide Corp., which reported last month that there were 28 leaks of the deadly chemical methyl isocyanate at its Institute, W.Va., plant in a five-year period, said this week there actually were nearly triple that number.

There were 61 "in-plant losses" of MIC from Jan. 1, 1980, to Dec. 14, 1984, and 22 leaks of a mixture of the chemical and phosgene, the Danbury, Conn.-based company said in a statement. None of the releases were extensive enough to come under federal reporting requirements, Carbide said.

Both chemicals are used to manufacture pesticides. Production of MIC was suspended at Institute after the Dec. 3 leak of the chemical at a Carbide plant in Bhopal, India, which killed more than 2,000 people.

The Institute leaks are the subject

of a lawsuit filed against Carbide this week. The suit, filed by a group of Institute residents, seeks \$3 billion, alleging that the company knowingly allowed MIC to leak from the plant, and that the releases damaged the plaintiffs' health.

The company said Wednesday it provided reports on 28 leaks of MIC to the House Subcommittee on Health and the Environment shortly after the panel held a hearing in Institute on Dec. 14.

Under federal law, MIC releases have to be reported to the EPA if at least one pound of the chemical goes beyond the perimeter of a plant over a 24-hour period, the company said. The company said it complied with the law.

The EPA did not support that claim. An EPA report released Jan. 23 said that of the reported leaks, about 12 were less than a pound, seven were greater than 10 pounds and two were undetermined.



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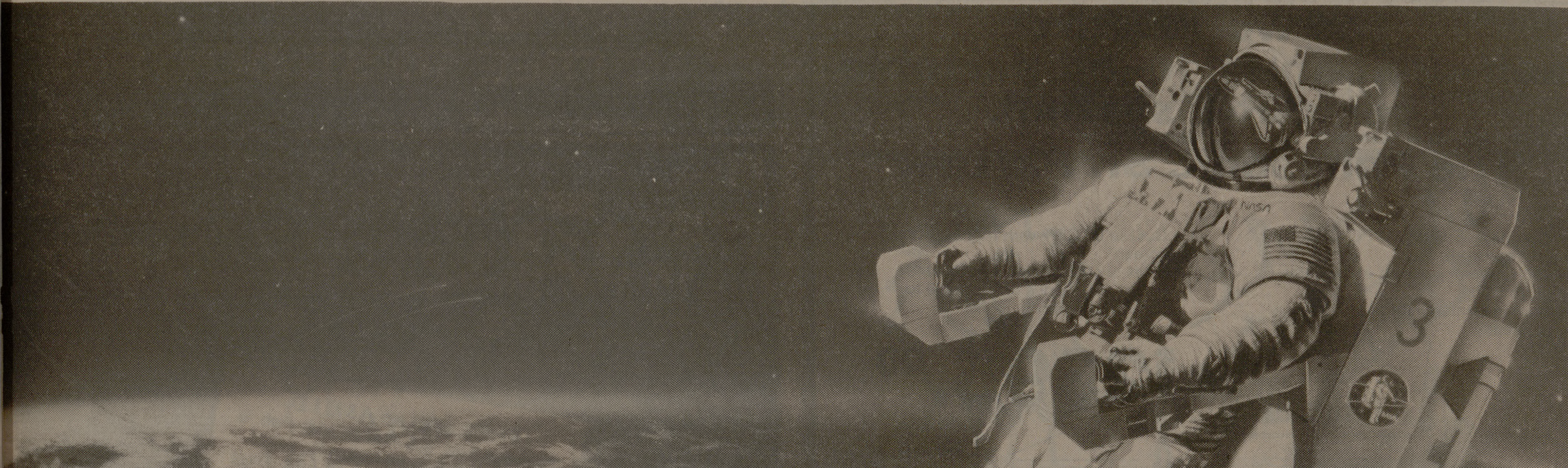
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