

(demonstrated using simple objects such as balloons or freshly dried laundry). Building upon the basic concepts, the program then offers a rudimentary explanation of what causes lightning and thunder. In addition to a teacher's guide and accompanying curriculum, the DVD also includes extras such as labeled slides, a glossary, and an iMovie project. Nicely illustrating key terms and concepts, this solid introduction to electricity aimed at young audiences is recommended. Aud: E, I. (E. Gieschen)

Ice People ★★★1/2

(2008) 77 min. DVD: \$24.95; individuals; \$150 w/PPR: high schools & public libraries; \$390 w/PPR: colleges & universities. Anne Aghion Films (dist. by NeoFlix).

Although Emmy-winning filmmaker Anne Aghion's narration-less *Ice People* boasts an abundance of almost mystical images of Antarctica's rocky landscapes and endless glaciers, this intimate look at what drives researchers to work in extreme conditions is ultimately about human nature. Aghion accompanied a pair of geologists and two of their students on a research mission to dig for fossils and find evidence of plant life as part of an effort to learn more about Earth's climatic history. After sunlight arrives following months of darkness, the team leaves the relative comfort of a research station for a helicopter trip to a barren landscape, where they begin their fieldwork while living in a large tent—facing hardships ranging from physical discomforts to psychological challenges. Intimate conversations with members of the team—three men and one woman—illustrate the difficul-

ties of maintaining a positive attitude amidst the lonely periods of downtime, while also capturing the politics between professors and lowly students that begins to creep into the group dynamics. While it's true that Aghion (who remains quite invisible during the production) captures a kind of darkening of the human spirit in such extreme circumstances, *Ice People* nevertheless emerges as a remarkable visual testament of life seen against the extraordinary backdrop of the beautiful but bleak environment of Antarctica. Sure to appeal to fans of Werner Herzog's similarly-themed, Oscar-nominated *Encounters at the End of the World*, this is highly recommended. Aud: C, P. (T. Keogh)

Nanotechnology: An Introduction ★★★

(2007) 26 min. DVD: \$89.95. VEA. PPR.

This overview of the emerging field of nanotechnology uses real-world examples to explore a potentially abstruse subject. Whether used in science, manufacturing, or medicine, nanotechnology simply involves working with material on a very small scale (like five hundred times smaller than the diameter of a single human hair). The advantages of nanotechnology are illustrated here in a variety of applications—from making fabric stain resistant to creating stained glass—interlaced with material on more technical aspects and principles related to nanoscience (including nanoparticles, the superadhesive “gecko effect,” and laser technology), as well as a brief look at the ethical and social implications of nanotechnology. Recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (E. Gieschen)