

Salt ★★1/2

(2009) 2 discs. 54 min. Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$19.99. PBS Video. ISBN: 978-1-60883-305-4.

The salt flats around Lake Eyre in southern Australia—the lowest point on the continent—would not be on most folks' travel wish-lists, but such is not the case for award-winning photographer Murray Fredericks, who sees it as a place that offers a view of a "perfect horizon," a void where he can point his camera into "pure space." Made in collaboration with filmmaker Michael Angus, this PBS-aired documentary presents footage from Fredericks' annual solo pilgrimages, as he ventures off with a bicycle, tent, camera, cell phone, and small food supply. *Salt* is essentially a kind of video diary, illustrated with starkly beautiful, otherworldly landscapes, as Fredericks initially goes about his daily routine (with only occasional calls to his family) but eventually begins to lose his sense of time, suffers some depression, experiences intense dreams, and ultimately feels a loss of control. When it rains, the flat is turned into a small lake, making it muddy and difficult for Fredericks to navigate. A somewhat odd personal documentary, *Salt's* natural spectacles—like a sunrise or a sky full of stars—tend to make Fredericks' earthly concerns seem relatively insignificant. Extras include interviews with Fredericks and

Angus, along with some stunning time-lapse sequences. Likely to be of interest to photographers and armchair philosophers, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: C, P. (S. Rees)

HEALTH & FITNESS

Surrounded by Waves ★★★

(2009) 52 min. DVD: \$390. Icarus Films. PPR. Closed captioned.

Jean-Christophe Ribot's documentary explores the subject of potential health dangers posed by electromagnetic waves in the environment—a controversial topic that encompasses the long-debated issue of a possible connection between cell phone use and cancer. Avoiding the pitfalls of sensationalism, Ribot skillfully maintains a sober, ostensibly objective tone as he interviews researchers who have conducted experiments to detect any effect that waves might have on plants, animals, or humans. As one might expect, the results are inconclusive, with some scientists—like Andrew Marino of the Louisiana State University's Health Services Center—sounding warnings, and others claiming that the findings of such alleged alarmists cannot be replicated in their laboratories. But as the film notes, those who

are most resistant to the idea that artificial radiation represents even a modest threat tend to be affiliated with institutes funded by industries with a vested financial interest in the outcome. On the other hand, some European researchers—including one whose organization was the first to identify the carcinogenic nature of Agent Orange—have reached definite conclusions about the reality of the danger, and in Sweden a small but growing segment of the population is diagnosed with electro-hypersensitivity, which is now recognized as a serious medical condition. While *Surrounded by Waves* obviously doesn't offer incontrovertible evidence about the health risks inherent in modern technology it does raise worthwhile questions in a thoughtful, measured way. Recommended. Aud: C, P. (F. Swietek)

CHILDBIRTH & PARENTING

Alcohol & Pregnancy: Making Healthy Choices ★★★1/2

(2010) 10 min. DVD: \$59.95: public libraries; \$99.95: high schools, colleges & universities. InJoy. PPR. Closed captioned.

This short, three-chapter program con-
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★★★ "Recommended"
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Video Librarian, Jan/Feb 2011

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Sorrentino, who talks in the third person as "the trendsetter himself," is backed up by a friend from college (a.k.a. "The Unit") and two attractive women, who he predictably flirts with while adjusting their form. "Ripped Upper Body" includes double arm-row and shoulder-press moves, the moving push up, and alternating plank row and side raises; "Killer Arms" features bicep curls and close-grip pushups; and "Juiced Glutes & Legs" incorporates squats and lunges. However, the last two segments are, as Sorrentino states, "pretty much why you bought the DVD," as they focus on the recipe for his taut and admittedly famous stomach with "Awesome Abs" and "Insane Abs," serving up an intense routine featuring crunches, bicycle kicks, and plank toe taps. Sure to be popular, this is a strong optional purchase. Aud: P. (J. Williams-Wood)



Yoga Journal: Pose Encyclopedia
★★★★

(2010) 60 min. DVD: \$19.99. BayView Entertainment (avail. from most distributors).



Although the box cover boasts "35 essential poses," the actual program appears to contain only 30, including the customary standing poses, backbends, and sun salutations, along with various pretzel twists. Presenting a 360-degree view of each pose, *Pose Encyclopedia* is a handy reference tool for both beginners and advanced students looking to refine individual postures and improve their overall practice. Jason Crandell (contributing editor for *Yoga Journal*) offers voiceover instruction while an onscreen model demonstrates each move. Crandell discusses the benefit of the pose, explains basic alignment and technique, and describes specific breathing cues, with each position expertly illustrated by the assistant. Unfortunately, no "play all" option exists, meaning that viewers are required to return to the main menu for each new pose. With that quibble aside, however, this is a fine visual reference manual for those who are interested in honing their yoga skills. Recommended. Aud: P. (N. Plympton)

(cont. from pg. 51)

cisely explains the effects of consuming alcoholic beverages during pregnancy and offers suggestions for couples who want to make responsible choices. A female narrator speaks over animations in Part 1, "Your Unborn Baby," explaining how alcohol reaches the fetus through the placenta; also covered are the effects of fetal alcohol syndrome (FAS) on the brain, with reinforcing comments from a foster mother who has cared for children with FAS. The second segment, "The Alcohol-Free Lifestyle," provides advice on making new friends and pursuing healthful activities, stresses the importance of spousal support, and cautions against drinking wine or liquor while breastfeeding. Finally, "Knowing Your Risk & Getting Help" explains that families with substance-related problems can lose custody of their kids as a result of irresponsible or abusive behavior. This last segment also describes six symptoms of alcohol abuse, recommends professional counseling when necessary, and suggests ways to find support services. Geared toward teens and young adults (although also appropriate for older pregnant women), this is highly recommended. Aud: H, C, P. (M. Puffer-Rothenberg)

The Evolution of Dad ★★★

(2010) 94 min. DVD: \$99.95; public libraries; \$249.95; colleges & universities. *Evolution of Dad* (avail. from Dane-Gramp Productions). PPR.

Filmmaker Dana Glazer explores the changing nature of American fatherhood over the years, leading up to the vastly changed roles of the 21st century. Concerns about workaholic distant dads have been around since the Industrial Revolution, aggravated by the Yankee work-ethic glorification of the "self-made man," always off somewhere earning money or building empires. But the comparatively recent surge of women working has led to the emergence of the stay-at-home father, a group still stigmatized and verbally emasculated, Glazer finds, by both sexes. Interviewing authors, people in the street, and friends and acquaintances, Glazer explores the "Mr. Mom" stereotype, as well as special cases, such as Maryland state trooper Kevin Knussman, whose choice to spend time with his ailing, pregnant wife inspired the historic—and controversial—Family Leave Act. Also addressed are the travails of divorced men who feel marginalized by courts, and the bittersweet example of Ralph Benitez, who declares that the responsibilities of parenthood—and grandparenthood—saved him from a downward spiral of drugs and dissolution (although the damage was done, and Benitez died before the film's completion). While aggrieved sons and daughters speak about dads who skipped out, no such men speak for themselves; nor are gay fathers represented. Despite these omissions, *The Evolution of Dad* is sure to spark discussion. DVD extras include a director's