

edited by Mitch Leslie



WEBCASTS

Celebrating the Double Helix

Fifty years ago this month, James Watson and Francis Crick (above) deciphered the double-stranded structure of DNA. To commemorate the discovery, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York is hosting a 5-day conference, The Biology of DNA. You won't have to break out the fancy duds to attend, because the lab's site* will show live Webcasts of all the sessions, which run from 26 February through 2 March. Luminaries such as Watson, Francis Collins, Walter Gilbert, Thomas Cech, and Sydney Brenner will put the breakthrough in context. Between sessions, a film crew from the Exploratorium will be broadcasting live interviews with many of the conference participants at this site.† The San Francisco-based science museum's intrepid reporters even plan to track researchers to that wellspring of scientific creativity—the bar.

* www.cshl.org/leadingstrand

† www.exploratorium.edu/origins

RESOURCES

Legal Adviser

An ecologist collecting rattlesnakes and an immunologist studying lab rats need to know the laws that cover their work. This new site from Michigan State University's law school provides a good rundown of federal and state statutes that govern care of captive animals, collection of specimens, and protection of endangered species. Learn about laws such as the recently passed Chimpanzee Sanctuary Act, which allows hard-working research chimps to retire, or read up on important cases and international agreements, such as the CITES treaty that regulates plant and animal commerce.

www.animallaw.info

EDUCATION

Math Class

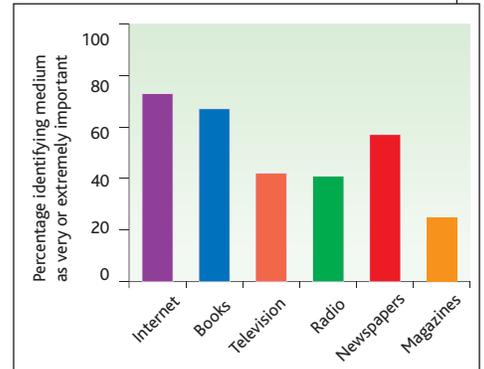
Looking for a concise tutorial on elementary vector analysis? How about an animated introduction to chaos theory? Try the well-stocked Math Archives, a trove of links mainly for college math teachers and students. The hundreds of links, rated by level of difficulty, cover fields from abstract algebra to trigonometry. The sites offer a range of resources, including sample problems, simulations, and statistical data sets. Visitors can also download stacks of free educational software for everything from matrix manipulations to advanced calculus. The current links are mostly up to date, but site co-director Earl Fife of Calvin College in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is seeking funding to upgrade the collection.

archives.math.utk.edu

NET NEWS

Web Use Might Be Leveling Off

Net surfers are spending more time online, but the number of Americans logging on seems to have plateaued, according to a new report on Internet use from the University of California, Los Angeles. For this third annual report, researchers surveyed more than 2000 randomly chosen households around the country. The results show that the Internet remains the prime source of information for many people. Nearly 75% of Web-savvy folks—those with 6 or more years of surfing experience—



rated the Internet as a "very or extremely" important source of information, ranking it higher than TV or magazines (above). The researchers found that time spent online rose to just over 11 hours per week, versus 9.8 in 2001.

One question that grabs sociologists, says project director Michael Suman, is whether the Internet will become pervasive like TV, or whether many Americans will remain offline. The survey supports the latter. After booming in the 1990s, Internet use seems to have stabilized: About 71% of the survey subjects logged on during 2002, versus 72% in 2001.

ccp.ucla.edu

IMAGES

Peek-a-Boo Leaves



Unlike dead men, fossil leaves do tell tales. By analyzing their size and shape, paleobotanists can gauge past climates, and evidence of nibbling can reveal the dining habits of ancient herbivores. The Cleared Leaf Collection from the University of California Museum of Paleontology in Berkeley can help researchers identify fossil leaves, a key step in inferring climate patterns or diet. The collection contains modern

leaves bleached to remove pigment and then stained, which highlights the pattern of veins and other distinctive characteristics. So far, the site holds images of nearly 400 cleared leaves, with another 1700 coming by midsummer. Above, a white oak leaf with munch marks from insects.

www.ucmp.berkeley.edu/collections/plants/clearedleaf.html

Send site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org. Archive: www.sciencemag.org/netwatch

Science

IMAGES: Peek-a-Boo Leaves

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