



COOL IMAGES

Let's Go to The Moon!

Dissatisfied with the new millennium? If you're still waiting for your personal rocket pack and Mars vacation, or if you believe the international space station really ought to be doughnut-shaped, perhaps it's because you spent some formative years reading the books resurrected in *Dreams of*

Space.* The lovingly compiled collection presents hundreds of illustrations from children's space-travel books published between 1883 and 1974, with a focus on those post-1950. Follow the chronological arrangement to watch spaceship images evolve from rounded pods to winged rockets to sleek, staged rockets with landing capsules. Satellite books boom post-Sputnik, and the city-under-a-dome theme emerges in the late 1950s. The collection includes books by Arthur C. Clarke, Isaac Asimov, and Wernher von Braun. Perhaps you'll recognize a favorite Golden Book or Tomorrowland image that inspired your inner astronaut.

sun3.lib.uci.edu/~jssisson/john.htm

SITE VISIT

Our Town

Forget intercity rivalries based on sports teams or chili cook-offs—the real measure of a town's mettle is its health. How does yours compete? To find out, consult the Community Health Status Indicators Project.

The Health Resources and Services Administration compiled this handy, searchable public health database with profiles of all 3082 U.S. counties. The crunched numbers come from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.S. Bureau of the Census, and a dozen other federal agencies. It may sound dry, but it's an epidemiological treasure trove containing indicators such as infant death rates, life expectancy, causes of death, infectious disease cases, types of air pollution, and use of mental and physical health services.

Counties are grouped with their "peers," defined according to population, population density, percent of people living in poverty, and age distributions. For example, Marion County (Indianapolis), Indiana, turns out to be demographically similar to the District of Columbia; San Francisco County, California; and Pinellas County (St. Petersburg), Florida. Each in-depth report identifies (with an approving apple symbol) measures in which a county compares favorably with its peers; a magnifying glass points out where a county needs work. The site suggests that counties consult high-performance peers for recommendations about successful public health programs.

www.communityhealth.hrsa.gov/default.htm



NETWATCH

edited by LAURA HELMUTH

HOT PICKS

Ovarian activation. The ovaries call on scads of genes to help with their hormone-producing and egg-releasing chores. Information about these genes is scattered throughout online gene and protein databases and scientific publications. The Ovarian Kaleidoscope Database aims to gather all this information in a searchable format. It's a community effort; researchers are invited to submit additional references.

ovary.stanford.edu

Beyond buckyballs. A half-dozen chemistry department Web sites spotlight Molecules of the Month. Three from the United Kingdom are the spiffiest: the Imperial College of Science, Technology, and Medicine in London hosts a collection that dates back to 1995; the University of Bristol† presents in-depth profiles, but the graphics require many plug-ins; and Oxford University's‡ site sports vivid images and lay-reader-friendly text.

www.ch.ic.ac.uk/motm

† www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/Chemistry/MOTM/motm.htm

‡ www.chem.ox.ac.uk/mom

Talk the talk. Hackers, according to The Jargon File, "regard slang formation and use as a game to be played for conscious pleasure." To translate hacker speak (hackers, by the way, are enthusiastic programmers—"crackers" break into computers), consult this quarter-century-old, continually growing lexicon. You can also learn the linguistic history of favorite terms such as "kluge" and "foo," or follow the rules to construct your own slang.

www.tuxedo.org/~esr/jargon/html/Introduction.html

SITE VISIT

Hit 'Em in Their Genes

Massive spraying campaigns keep summer's blood-sucking disease vectors down for now, but research on mosquito genomics might suggest better bug-busting strategies for the future. The Mosquito Genomics World Wide Web Server hosts databases for five species, including those that carry the West Nile virus, yellow fever, and malaria. It also hosts a massive database of mosquito-related publications.

Eventually, says curator Dennis Knudson of Colorado State University in Fort Collins, all the databases will be folded into the current, all-species Mosquito Genome Database. The server went live in 1994; Knudson says it was born of "our own research interest—what makes given strains good vectors for parasitic diseases?" They get more than 40,000 queries per month, a number that has jumped since the West Nile virus started giving the United States the creepy-crawlies.

The searchable references include about 70,000 entries. The archive goes back farther than most online bibliographic databases: Almost half the references came from a 1970s University of Notre Dame mosquito reference archive, originally stored on punch cards, that Knudson's team rescued and indexed.

Send Internet news and great Web site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org

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