

# Science

17 May 2002

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Pages 1189–1352 \$9

**RNA Silencing and  
Noncoding RNA**



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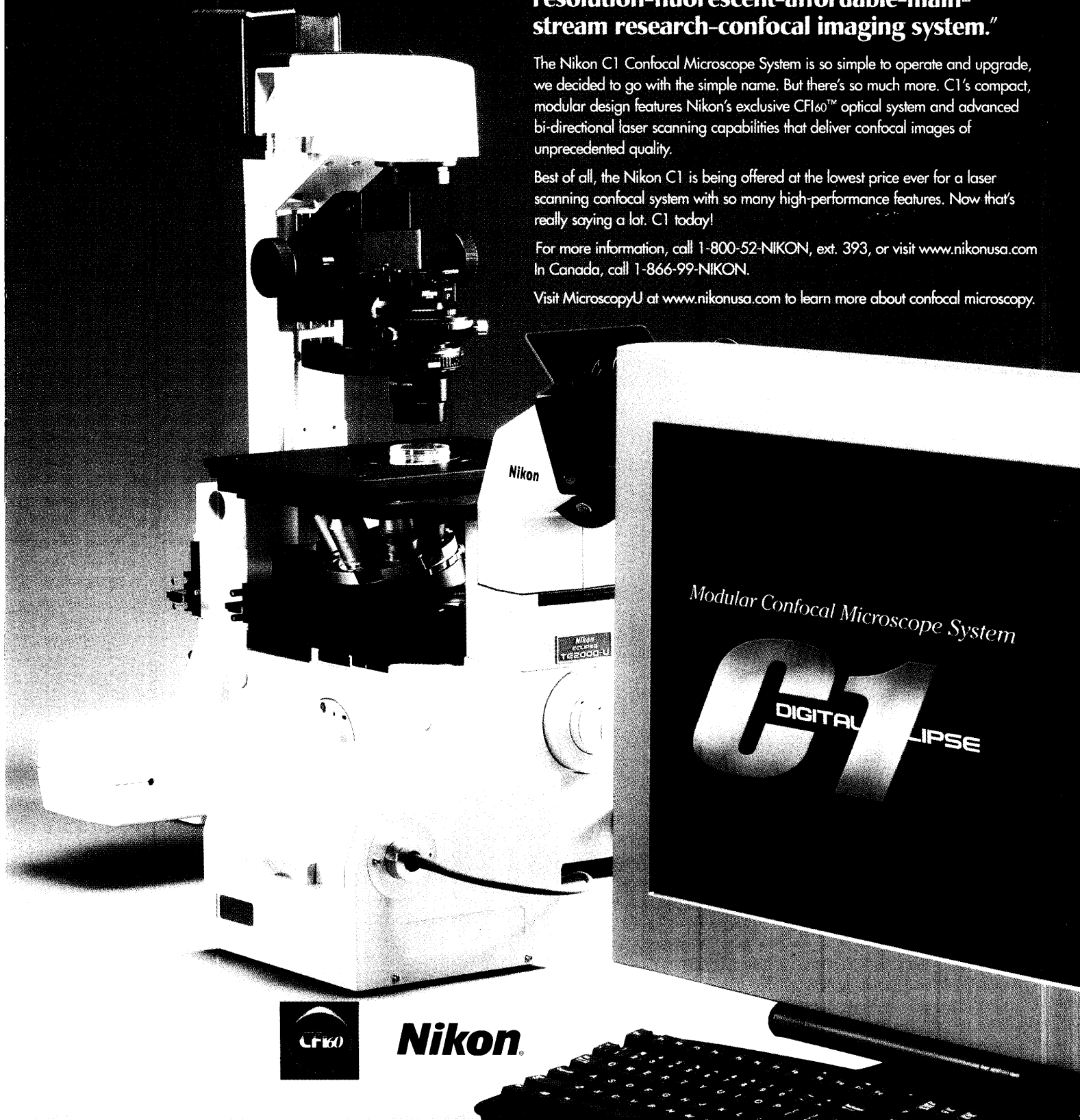
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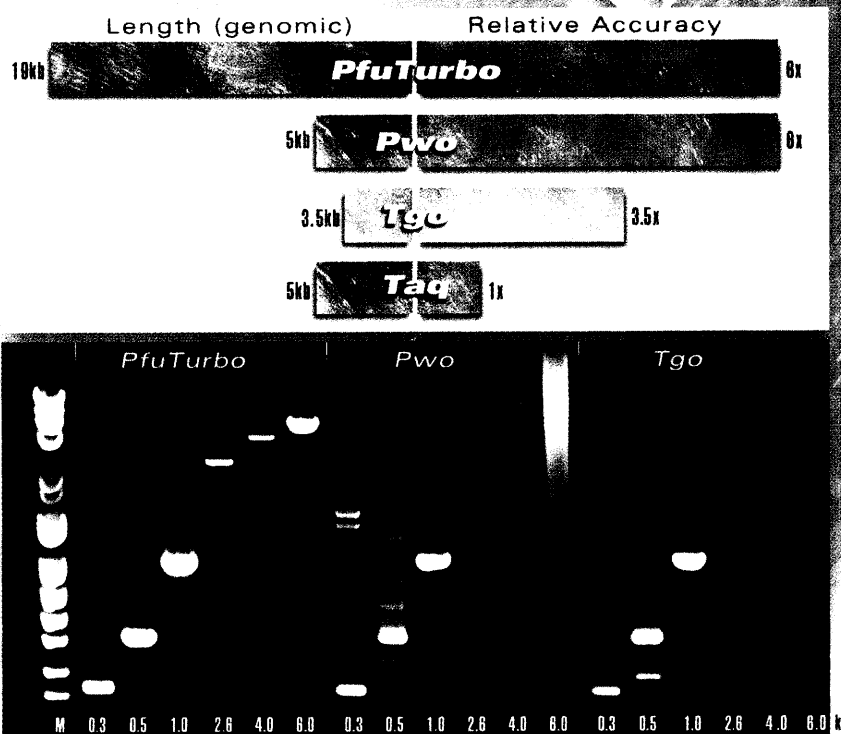
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† Högrefe, H., et al. (2002) *Proc Natl. Acad. Sci. USA* 99, 596-601

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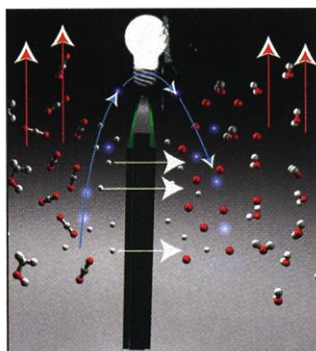
# Science

Volume 296 17 May 2002

Number 5571

1195 **SCIENCE ONLINE**  
1197 **THIS WEEK IN SCIENCE**  
1201 **EDITORIAL**  
Sheila Tobias, Meg Urry,  
Aparna Venkatesan  
*Physics: For Women, the  
Last Frontier*

1203 **EDITORS' CHOICE**  
1207 **NETWATCH**  
1208 **CONTACT SCIENCE**  
1329 **TECH.SIGHT/NEW PRODUCTS**  
Microdissection



**1222**

Small fuel cells,  
big promise

## NEWS

### NEWS OF THE WEEK

- 1212 **INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:** DuPont Ups Ante on Use of Harvard's OncoMouse
- 1213 **NSF REAUTHORIZATION:** Community Hails Bill to Double Budget
- 1213 **U.S. ANTITERRORISM:** Panel Would Screen Foreign Scholars
- ▼1215 **EVOLUTION:** Did an Impact Trigger the  
1305 Dinosaurs' Rise?
- 1215 **SCIENCESCOPE**
- 1216 **DRUG RESEARCH:** Novartis Sows Its Future in U.S. Soil
- 1217 **NEUROSCIENCE:** Big Bucks for MIT Brain Center
- 1218 **PLANT GENETICS:** A Hidden *Arabidopsis* Emerges Under Stress
- 1218 **COMPUTING:** Gas-Filled Chip Bids to Outshine a Computer
- 1219 **ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT:** Cherished Concepts Faltering in the Field

- 1221 **DEVELOPMENT:** Mutations Reveal Genes in Zebrafish

### NEWS FOCUS

#### TECHNOLOGY

- 1222 **FUEL CELLS:** Shrinking Fuel Cells Promise Power in Your Pocket  
Biofuel Cells
- 1224 **BATTERIES:** The Battery: Not Yet a Terminal Case  
Inside a Battery
- 1226 **PLANT GENETICS:** Finding New Ways to Protect Drought-Stricken Plants
- 1229 **FISHERY SCIENCE:** Bigger Populations Needed for Sustainable Harvests
- 1230 **CORPORATE RESEARCH:** Japan Asks Why More Yen Don't Yield More Products  
Japan's Drugmakers Need a Boost to Compete
- 1233 **RANDOM SAMPLES**

**1226**

Beating the drought



## SCIENCE'S COMPASS

### 1235 LETTERS

**Politics and the IPCC** B. Bolin. **Biological Weapons, War Crimes, and WWI** J. Rath; F. H. Kasten. **Response** T. Graham Jr. **Another Unmet Public Health Need** S. P. Baker and T. D. Baker. **Looking at a Renegade's Predecessors** W. S. Peters; F. Burton. **Corrections and Clarifications**

### POLICY FORUM

- 1241 **SPACE SCIENCE:** Space Junk—Protecting Space for Future Generations R. Crowther

### BOOKS ET AL.

- 1243 **HUMAN EVOLUTION:** *Second Nature Economic Origins of Human Evolution* H. Ofek, reviewed by A. Grafen
- 1244 **HISTORY OF SCIENCE:** *From Certainty to Uncertainty The Story of Science and Ideas in the Twentieth Century* F. D. Peat, reviewed by J. Gribbin
- 1244 **Browsings**

### PERSPECTIVES

- 1245 **ECOLOGY:** Elephants, Mice, and Red Herrings G. P. Burness
- 1247 **GEOCHEMISTRY:** Tiny Tracers Tell Tall Tales C. J. Ballentine

- ▼1248 **IMMUNOLOGY:** A Pathogen Receptor on  
1323 Natural Killer Cells E. Vivier and C. A. Biron

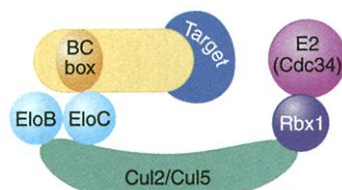
- ▼1250 **AGING:** Genomic Priorities in Aging P. Hasty  
1276 and J. Vijg

- 1251 **PALEOCLIMATE:** A Fresh Look at Glacial Floods S. M. Colman

- 1253 **RETROSPECTIVE:** César Milstein (1927–2002) T. A. Springer

### REVIEW

- 1254 **GENE EXPRESSION:** Emerging Roles of Ubiquitin in Transcription Regulation R. C. Conaway, C. S. Brower, J. W. Conaway



**1254**

E3 ubiquitin ligase  
complex

**1247**

The mantle,  
then and  
now





## RESEARCH

### BREVIA

- 1275** **Rebirth of Novae as Distance Indicators Due to Efficient, Large Telescopes** M. Della Valle and R. Gilmozzi

### RESEARCH ARTICLES

- ▼ **1276** **Premature Aging in Mice Deficient in DNA Repair and Transcription** J. de Boer, J. O. Andressoo, J. de Wit, J. Huijman, R. B. Beems, H. van Steeg, G. Weeda, G. T. J. van der Horst, W. van Leeuwen, A. P. N. Themmen, M. Meradji, J. H. J. Hoeijmakers

- 1280** **Structural Basis of Transcription Initiation: RNA Polymerase Holoenzyme at 4 Å Resolution** K. S. Murakami, S. Masuda, S. A. Darst

- 1285** **Structural Basis of Transcription Initiation: An RNA Polymerase Holoenzyme-DNA Complex** K. S. Murakami, S. Masuda, E. A. Campbell, O. Muzzini, S. A. Darst

### REPORTS

- 1290** **Formation of a Matter-Wave Bright Soliton** L. Khaykovich, F. Schreck, G. Ferrari, T. Bourdel, J. Cubizolles, L. D. Carr, Y. Castin, C. Salomon

- 1293** **Electrochemistry and Electrogenerated Chemiluminescence from Silicon Nanocrystal Quantum Dots** Z. Ding, B. M. Quinn, S. K. Haram, L. E. Pell, B. A. Korgel, A. J. Bard

- 1297** **Global Azimuthal Anisotropy in the Transition Zone** J. Trampert and H. Jan van Heijst

- 1300** **Seismic Evidence for Olivine Phase Changes at the 410- and 660-Kilometer Discontinuities** S. Lebedev, S. Chevrot, R. D. van der Hilst

- 1302** **Identity and Search in Social Networks** D. J. Watts, P. S. Dodds, M. E. J. Newman

- ▼ **1305** **Ascent of Dinosaurs Linked to an Iridium Anomaly at the Triassic-Jurassic Boundary** P. E. Olsen, D. V. Kent, H.-D. Sues, C. Koeberl, H. Huber, A. Montanari, E. C. Rainforth, S. J. Fowell, M. J. Szajna, B. W. Hartline

- 1308** **C-Cadherin Ectodomain Structure and Implications for Cell Adhesion Mechanisms** T. J. Boggan, J. Murray, S. Chappuis-Flament, E. Wong, B. M. Gumbiner, L. Shapiro

## RNA SILENCING AND NONCODING RNA

- 1259** **The Other RNA World**

### VIEWPOINTS

- 1260** **An Expanding Universe of Noncoding RNAs** G. Storz

- 1263** **RNA Silencing: The Genome's Immune System** R. H. A. Plasterk

- 1265** **Ancient Pathways Programmed by Small RNAs** P. D. Zamore

### REVIEW

- 1270** **RNA-Dependent RNA Polymerases, Viruses, and RNA Silencing** P. Ahlquist

See also *Science's STKE* on p. 1195 and *Report* on p. 1319

- 1313** **Vitamin D Receptor As an Intestinal Bile Acid Sensor** M. Makishima, T. T. Lu, W. Xie, G. K. Whitfield, H. Domoto, R. M. Evans, M. R. Haussler, D. J. Mangelsdorf

- 1316** **Heterotopic Shift of Epithelial-Mesenchymal Interactions in Vertebrate Jaw Evolution** Y. Shigetani, F. Sugahara, Y. Kawakami, Y. Murakami, S. Hirano, S. Kuratani

- 1319** **Induction and Suppression of RNA Silencing by an Animal Virus** H. Li, W. X. Li, S. W. Ding

- 1321** **Is Face Processing Species-Specific During the First Year of Life?** O. Pascalis, M. de Haan, C. A. Nelson

- ▼ **1323** **Direct Recognition of Cytomegalovirus by Activating and Inhibitory NK Cell Receptors** H. Arase, E. S. Mocarski, A. E. Campbell, A. B. Hill, L. L. Lanier

## 1305

Tracking the rise of dinosaurs



RNA silencing of green fluorescent protein (GFP) (center) in leaves from *Nicotiana benthamiana* is suppressed by an animal (left; B2 protein of flock house virus) or a plant (right) viral suppressor, leading to enhanced GFP expression (lighter green/yellow areas). The role of RNA silencing in defending both plant and animal genomes from invading foreign nucleic acids, the mechanisms underlying RNA silencing, and noncoding RNAs are considered in this special section. [Image: Shou-Wei Ding]



## New on Science Express

Catching lymphocytes in the act



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CONTENT HIGHLIGHTS AS OF 17 MAY 2002

## science magazine

[www.sciencemag.org](http://www.sciencemag.org)

### SCIENCE EXPRESS

[www.sciencexpress.org](http://www.sciencexpress.org)

#### A Continuous Source of Bose-Einstein Condensed Atoms

A. P. Chikkatur *et al.*

An optical "scoop" is used to transfer atoms from one condensate to another and thereby provide a continuous reservoir of condensed atoms.

#### Two-Photon Imaging of Lymphocyte Motility and Antigen Response in Intact Lymph Node

M. J. Miller, S. H. Wei, I. Parker, M. D. Cahalan

Two-photon imaging reveals T and B cell behavior in real time within organized lymphoid tissue.

#### A Heat-Sensitive TRP Channel Expressed in Keratinocytes

A. M. Peier *et al.*

A receptor in the TRP family (TRPV3) that detects warm—but not hot—temperatures is unexpectedly found on skin cells rather than neurons.

## TECHNICAL COMMENTS

### Spin Polarization of Injected Electrons

LaBella *et al.* (Reports, 25 May 2001, p. 1518) reported that "a large spin-polarized (~92%) current can be injected into GaAs [gallium arsenide] at high temperatures (100 K)," using a "100% spin-polarized" scanning tunneling microscope (STM) tip as the electron source. Egelhoff *et al.* comment that, in relating the measured polarization in the light emitted from the GaAs to the spin polarization of the injected electrons, LaBella *et al.* neglected to correct for refraction as the light left the sample; suggest that the group did not measure the spin-relaxation lifetime value of the sample used, which bears on the relationship between the electron spin polarization at recombination and the injected-current polarization; and argue that it is unlikely that the electrons emitted from the STM were indeed 100% spin polarized. Thus, Egelhoff *et al.* conclude, "an electron spin polarization at recombination of 25.2% can be inferred from these experiments," not the 92% cited in the original report. LaBella *et al.*, in their response, agree that their analysis did not adequately account for refraction and acknowledge that they did not measure the spin-relaxation lifetime for the sample studied, although they used a published value for GaAs of a similar hole density and temperature.

The full text of these comments can be seen at [www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/296/5571/1195a](http://www.sciencemag.org/cgi/content/full/296/5571/1195a)

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D. Gross  
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J. Marburger  
In his keynote address to the Second National Postdoc Network meeting, President Bush's science adviser vigorously affirmed the importance of postdocs to U.S. leadership in S&T.

#### SINGAPORE: Biocomputing at Singapore's Top R&D Institutes

P. Kolatkar

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P. H. Dee  
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#### EUROPE: New Cardiovascular Center Puts Heart into Spanish Research

S. Bartlett

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science of aging knowledge environment

#### Don't Pass the Buck

S. Pyne  
Institute stakes its claim in age-related research.

#### Unnerved

K. Morgan  
Molecule that pumps neurons up also keeps them down.

### science's stke

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signal transduction knowledge environment

#### Perspective: RNA Editing of Neurotransmitter Receptors in the Mammalian Brain

C. Schmauss and J. R. Howe

Building diversity from a single transcript.

#### Perspective: TRAF1—Lord Without a RING

J. C. Reed

TRAF1, the only TRAF family member without a RING domain, regulates the signaling capacity of TNFR superfamily members.

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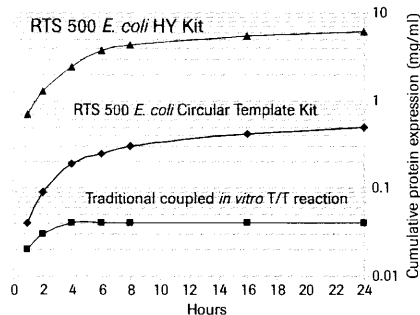
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\* The Rapid Translation System currently consists of: RTS 500 Instrument (3.75 kg), the RTS 500 *E. coli* HY Kit, the RTS 500 *E. coli* Circular Template Kit, and the RTS 100 *E. coli* HY Kit (dedicated instrument not required).

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# THIS WEEK IN Science

edited by Phil Szuromi

## Six Contentions on Separation

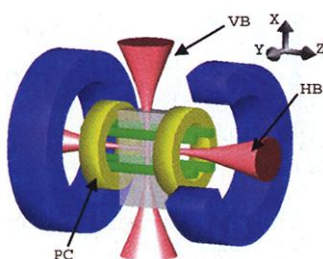
Social structures are organized such that, for example, one can trace a path through local networks from one individual to another in relatively few steps (the so-called six degrees of separation). Watts *et al.* (p. 1302) have modeled this finding based on six insights into the structure of social networks formed by groups of individuals. This model may prove useful in developing efficient network searches, whether for people or for pages on the World Wide Web.

## Modeling a Heterogeneous Mantle

Seismic velocities increase abruptly at two depths in the mantle, 410 and 660 kilometers (km). These discontinuities are usually attributed to structural transformations of olivine to ringwoodite at 410 km and ringwoodite to perovskite plus magnesiowüstite at 660 km. However, not all seismic data are consistent with this interpretation, and two reports detail further studies of mantle structure. Lebedev *et al.* (p. 1300) show that the seismic velocities determined beneath southeast Asia and Australia are definitely correlated with the olivine transformations. In particular, the temperature derivative of the change in pressure of each transformation can be extracted from the seismic data. These results should allow Earth scientists to distinguish anomalous mantle dynamics that may be regional in scale from these global structural transformations. Trampert and van Heijst (p. 1297) have completed a detailed survey of the variations in sound velocities of shear waves that propagate in different directions (called seismic anisotropy) in the transition zone. They find lateral variations in the anisotropy that they relate to heterogeneous structures, such as alignment of grains or alignment of melt pockets.

## Shooting Atom Clouds

Solitons, waves that propagate without attenuation or broadening, are usually associated with a nonlinear effect that provides the necessary feedback mechanism that maintains the wave disturbance in its original shape. Khaykovich *et al.* (p. 1290) now show that bright solitons can be formed in clouds of atoms in a Bose-Einstein condensate by tuning the interaction between atoms from repulsive to attractive prior to launching the atom bunch into a wave guide. Such a matter-wave packet that does not spread with time should prove useful for atom interferometry and studying atomic collisions.



## 1305 Triassic-Jurassic Impact?

The cause of the extinction of many species at the Triassic-Jurassic boundary is unknown. Olsen *et al.* (p. 1305; see the news story by Kerr) found an enrichment of iridium at the boundary that may be associated with an extraterrestrial bolide impact. An impact may have wiped out many species and left room for the dinosaurs to grow and dominate in the Jurassic.

## And in Brevia ...

Using the power of the Very Large Telescope and a new technique, Della Valle and Gilmozzi. (p. 1275) have found four of the most distant novae, which can be used as "standard candles" to measure the shape and expansion of the universe.

## How $\sigma$ Factor Finds DNA

A major control point of gene expression is the initiation of messenger RNA synthesis. In bacteria, promoter recognition and melting requires a complex that comprises RNA polymerase and the  $\sigma$  factor. Now Murakami *et al.* (p. 1280 and 1285) have determined the crystal structures of *Thermus aquaticus* core RNA polymerase bound to  $\sigma$  and of the holoenzyme complex with a promoter DNA fragment at resolutions of 4.0 and 6.5 angstroms, respectively. The structures give insight into how the holoenzyme recognizes promoters and melts the DNA to give a transcription competent open complex. All of the sequence-specific contacts with the promoter are mediated by the  $\sigma$  subunit, and  $\sigma$  also plays a role in directing the melted DNA template strand into the RNA polymerase active site. The structures provide a basis to design additional experiments that will further improve our understanding of transcription initiation.

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## DNA Damage and Aging

A popular theory postulates that aging is triggered by cellular accumulation of oxidative damage. The causal role of oxidative DNA damage in aging is strongly supported in a study by de Boer *et al.* (p. 1276; see the Perspective by Hasty and Vijg) of mice carrying a mutant version of the DNA helicase gene XPD. This gene causes the rare human disorder trichothiodystrophy (TTD). The XPD mutant mice, which are severely impaired in transcription-coupled repair and mildly impaired in nucleotide-excision repair, exhibited many symptoms of premature aging, including osteoporosis, infertility, early graying, and reduced life-span. Mice doubly mutant for XPD and a second gene required for nucleotide-excision repair, XPA, showed greatly accelerated aging that correlated with an increased cellular sensitivity to oxidative DNA damage. The authors propose that the aging phenotype in the TTD mice is caused by unrepaired DNA damage that compromises transcription, which in turn leads to functional inactivation of critical genes and cell death.  $\Sigma$

## Charged Nanocrystals Light Up in Solution

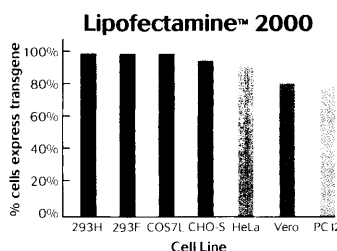
Semiconductor nanocrystals can accept a charge carrier (an electron or hole). Compound semiconductor nanocrystals such as CdS, when charged in solution at electrodes, tend to be chemically unstable. Ding *et al.* (p. 1293) show that organically capped silicon nanocrystals are stable after electron and hole injection in organic solvents and that oppositely charged nanocrystals can recombine in solution and emit light. Greater light emission was obtained by adding coreactants for the recombination reaction, such as oxalate or persulfate anions.



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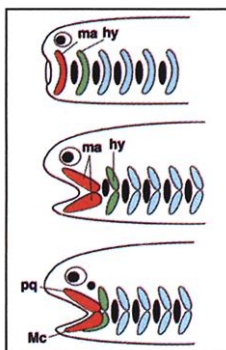
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## Narrowing in on Jaw Development

The evolution of vertebrate jaws allowed their diversification into a wide range of feeding niches. Shigetani *et al.* (p. 1316) examined the expression patterns of genes controlling the developing head of the lamprey, a jawless vertebrate. These genes are expressed in regions producing neural crest with a distinct fate from that seen in the developing heads of higher vertebrates such as chicks and mice. Although the correlation between fate and expression correlation has shifted, the relation between genes in the lamprey is the same as in higher vertebrates. A cascade of signals that is present through a broad area of the neural crest and epithelium of the lamprey has been restricted to the mandibular region in vertebrates.

## How to Stick Together

Cell-cell adhesion relies upon the direct interaction of integral membrane proteins. One of the primary components is a family of molecules known as cadherins, which contain a string of five highly similar domains disposed on the outside of the cell membrane. Boggon *et al.* (p. 1308) describe the crystal structure of this extracellular portion of C-cadherin and suggest how interactions between C-cadherin molecules on opposing cells and on the same cell serve to create a meshwork that ties the cells together.  $\Sigma$

## Vitamin D Versus Fat

Mechanistic insight into the epidemiologic relation between colon cancer, vitamin D, and a high-fat diet is now offered by Makishima *et al.* (p. 1313), who report that a receptor for vitamin D in the intestine also binds a bile acid called lithocholic acid (LCA). Increased amounts LCA are associated with a high-fat diet, and because it is poorly reabsorbed, it passes into the colon. Binding to the vitamin D receptor stimulates the expression of CYP3A, an enzyme that can catabolize LCA. These results may explain how the enteric system protects itself from the toxic effects of LCA and how vitamin D may guard against colon cancer.

## RNA Interference Versus Viruses

Posttranscriptional gene silencing (PTGS) in plants, a form of RNA silencing wherein RNA produced by a gene is destroyed, protects them from invading nucleic acids, mainly viruses and transposons. The biological role of the highly related phenomenon of RNA interference (RNAi) in animals has been less clear. Li *et al.* (p. 1319) now show that RNAi can be induced by viral infection of insect cells and plays a similar protective role. The virus contains a protein that is able to suppress RNAi, indicating that the virus is in an evolutionary "arms race" with its host.

## About Faces in the Brain

Babies can discriminate among foreign speech sounds at 4 to 6 months of age, but this ability disappears at about 10 to 12 months and is limited to their native languages. Pascalis *et al.* (p. 1321) report a similar finding in visual processing, in that 6-month-old babies can discriminate individual monkey and human faces. However, 9-month-olds, tested with the same procedure, only discriminate human faces.

## Stop-Start Action in NK Cell Activation

The natural killer (NK) cell receptor LY49H was recently identified as being responsible for rendering certain strains of mice resistant to mouse cytomegalovirus (MCMV). Infection with the virus should alter host proteins that interact with LY49H and lead to NK cell activation. Unexpectedly, Arase *et al.* (p. 1323; see the Perspective by Vivier and Biron) found that the ligand for LY49H is a type I-anchored glycoprotein encoded by the virus itself. In mice that are resistant to MCMV, the protein m157 activated LY49H+ NK cells, but m157 bound an inhibitory LY49 NK receptor in a susceptible strain of mice. NK cell inhibition through direct interaction between a viral protein and host receptor may have evolved as a viral evasion strategy, which was followed by the evolution of an activatory protein.  $\Sigma$

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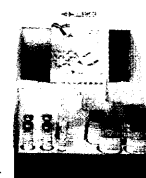
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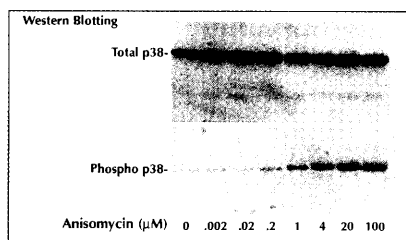
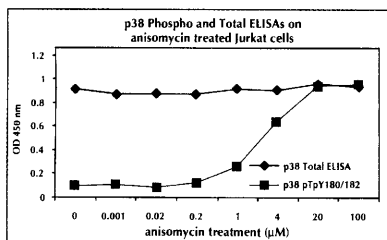
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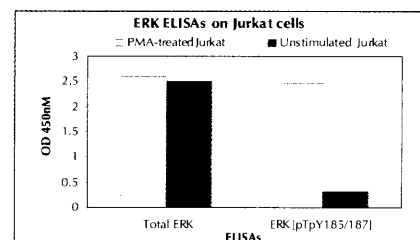
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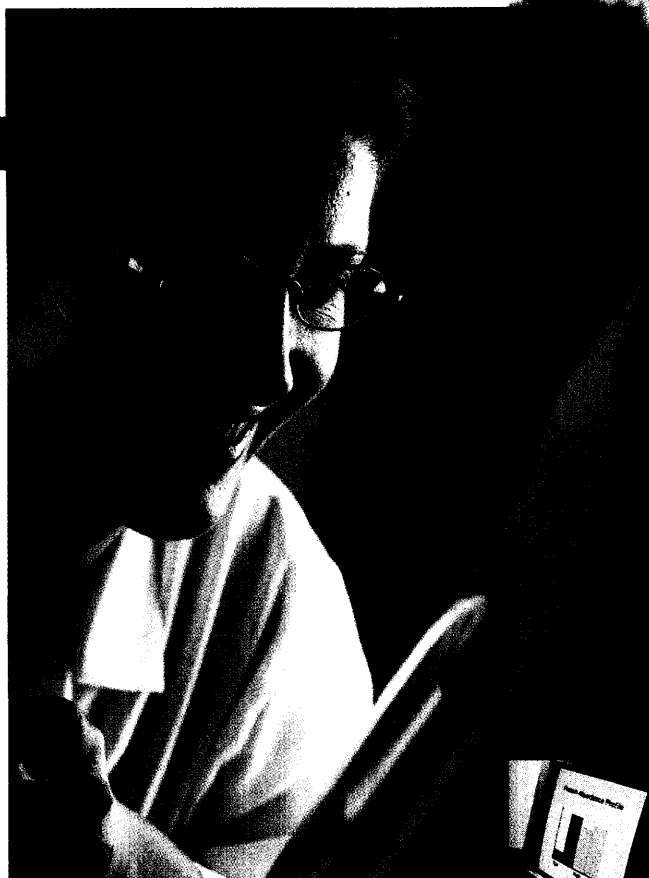
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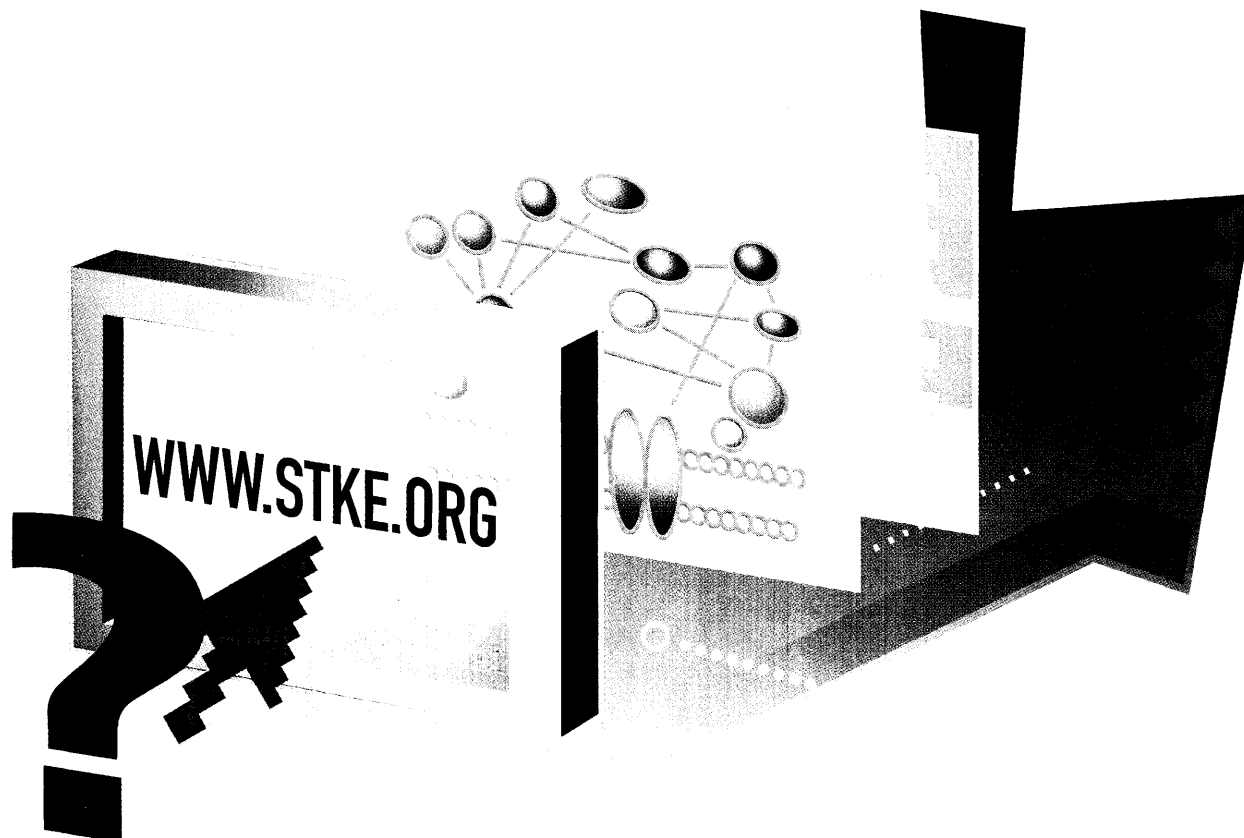


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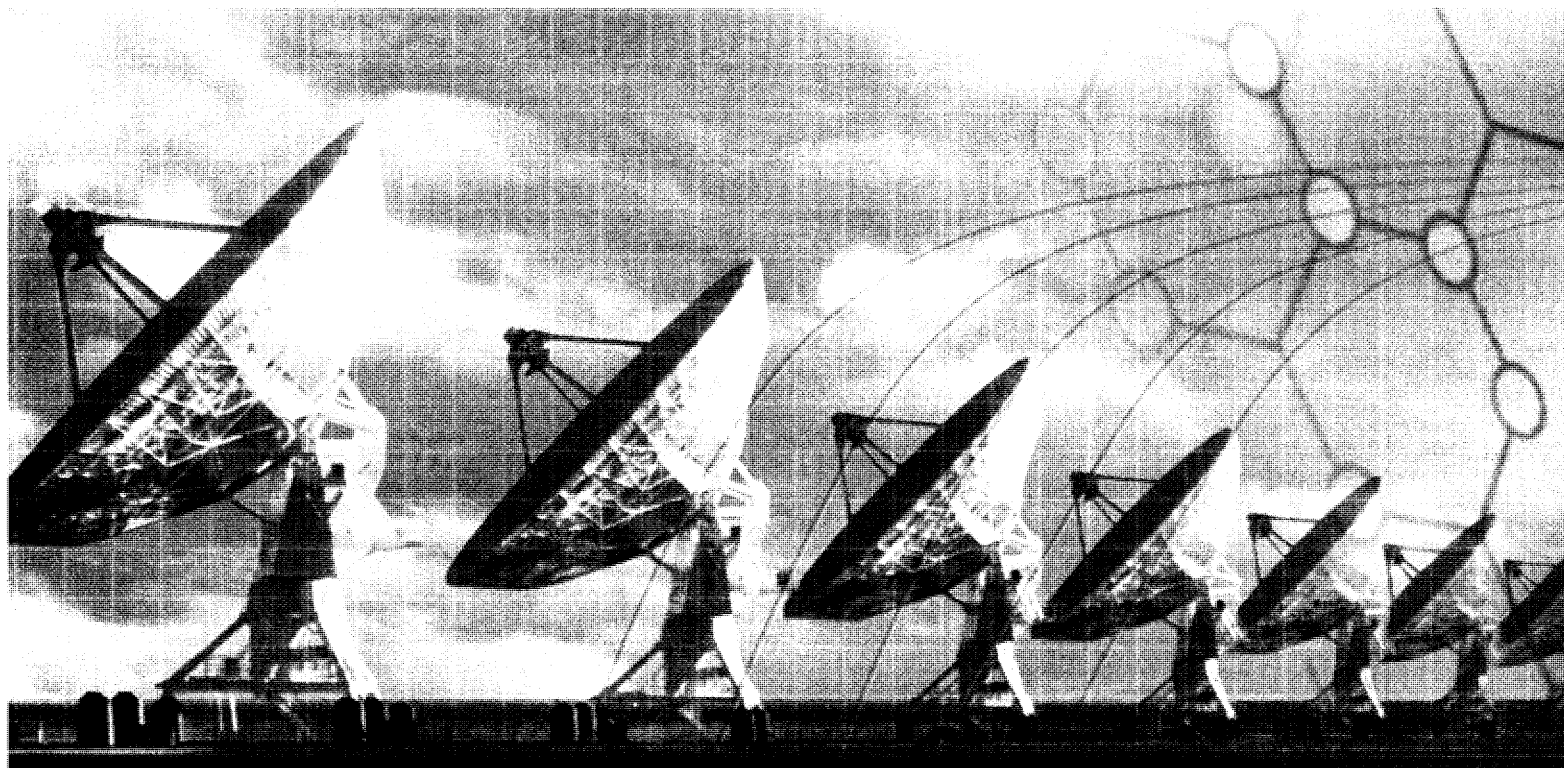
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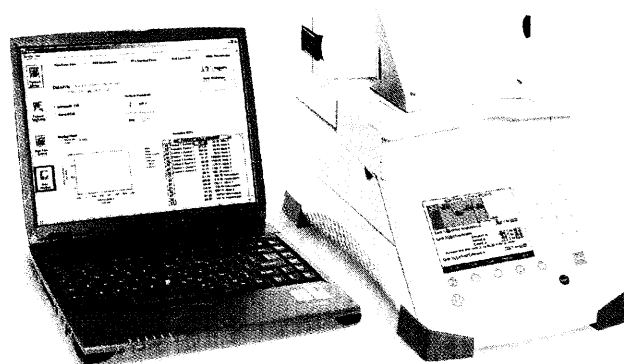
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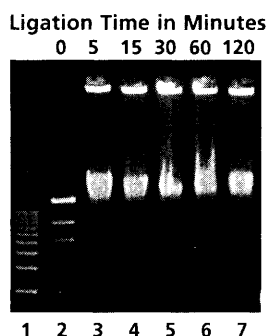
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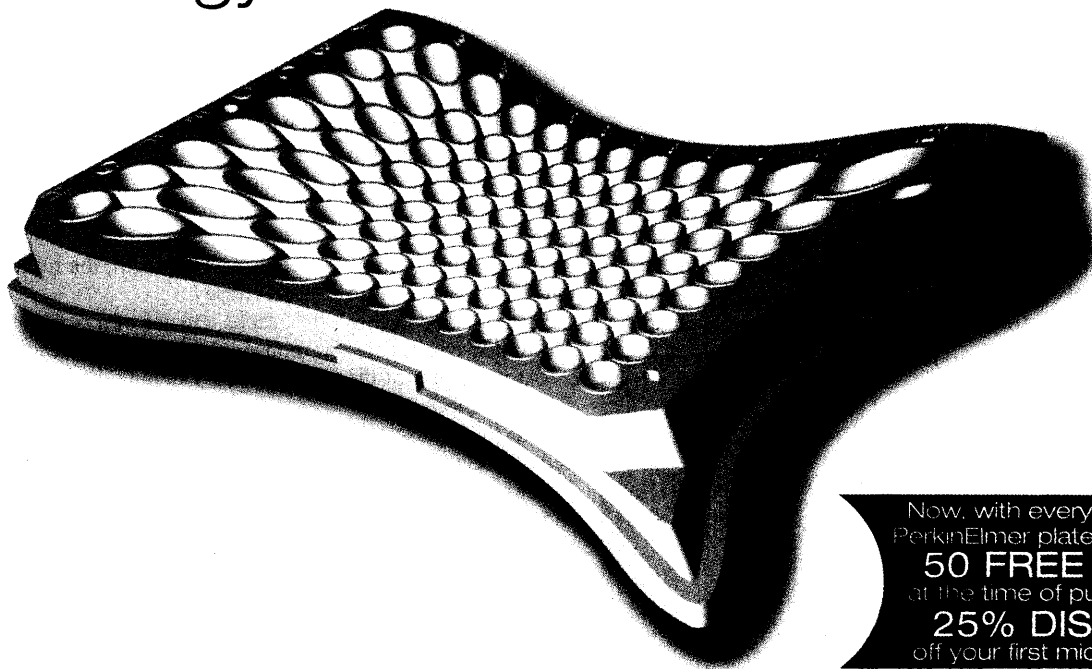
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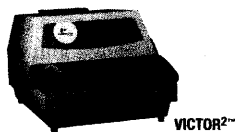
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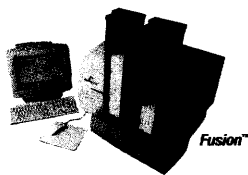
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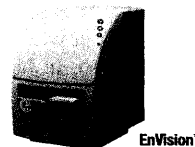
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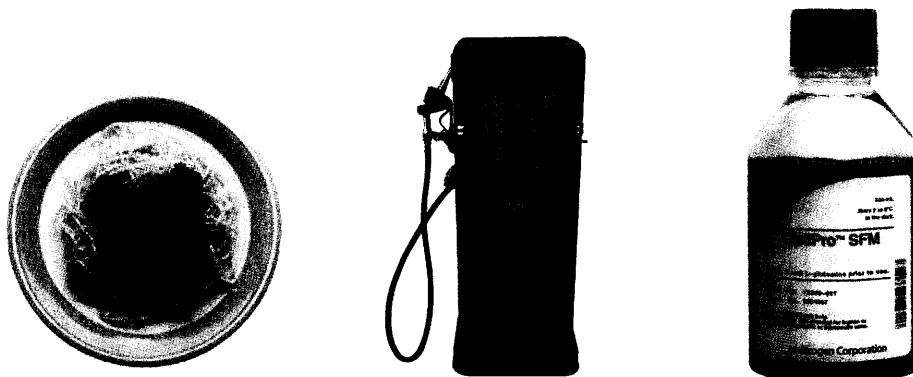
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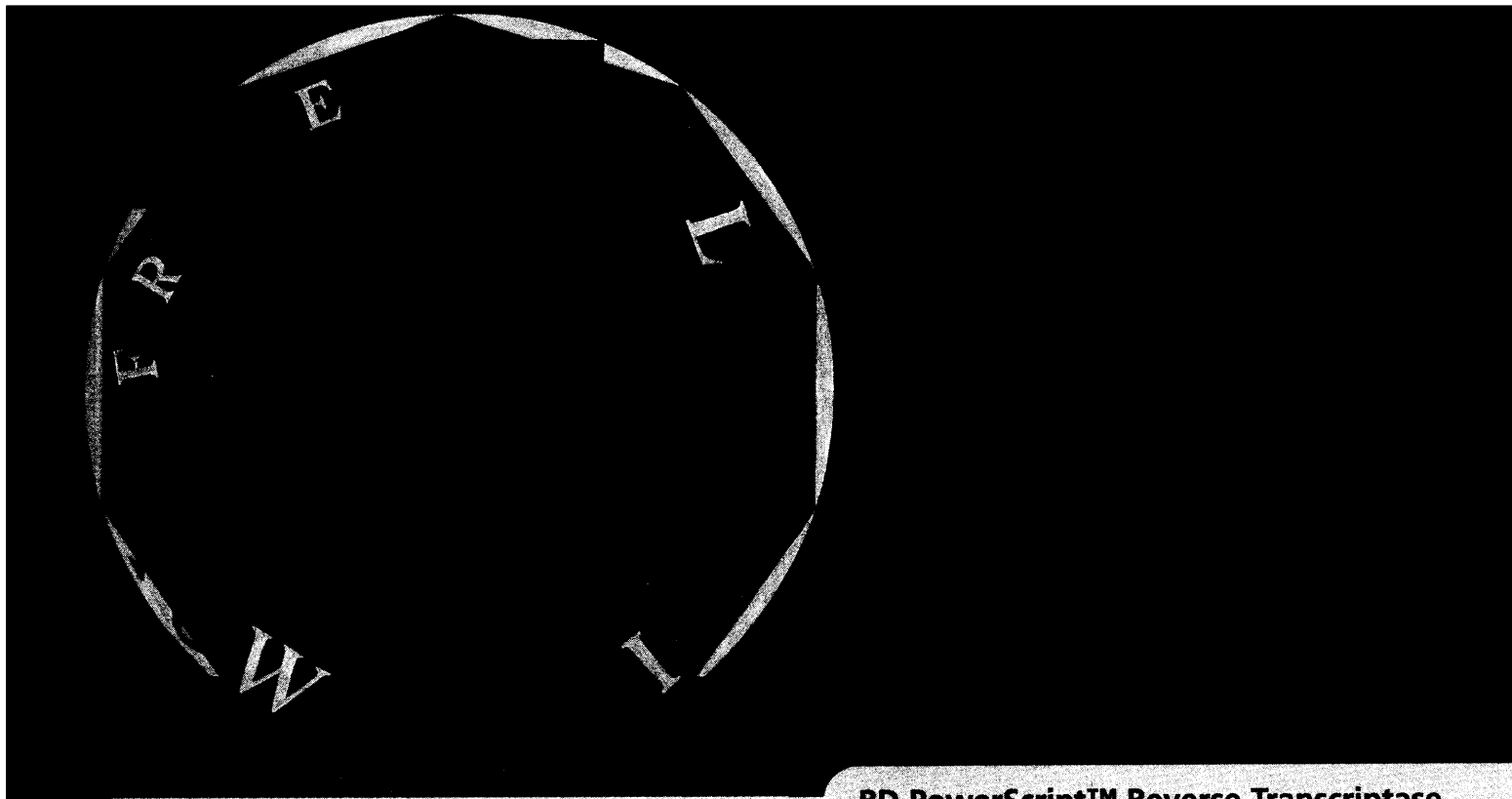


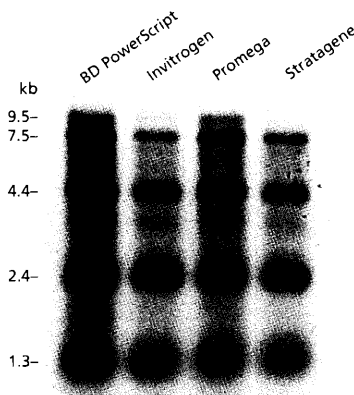
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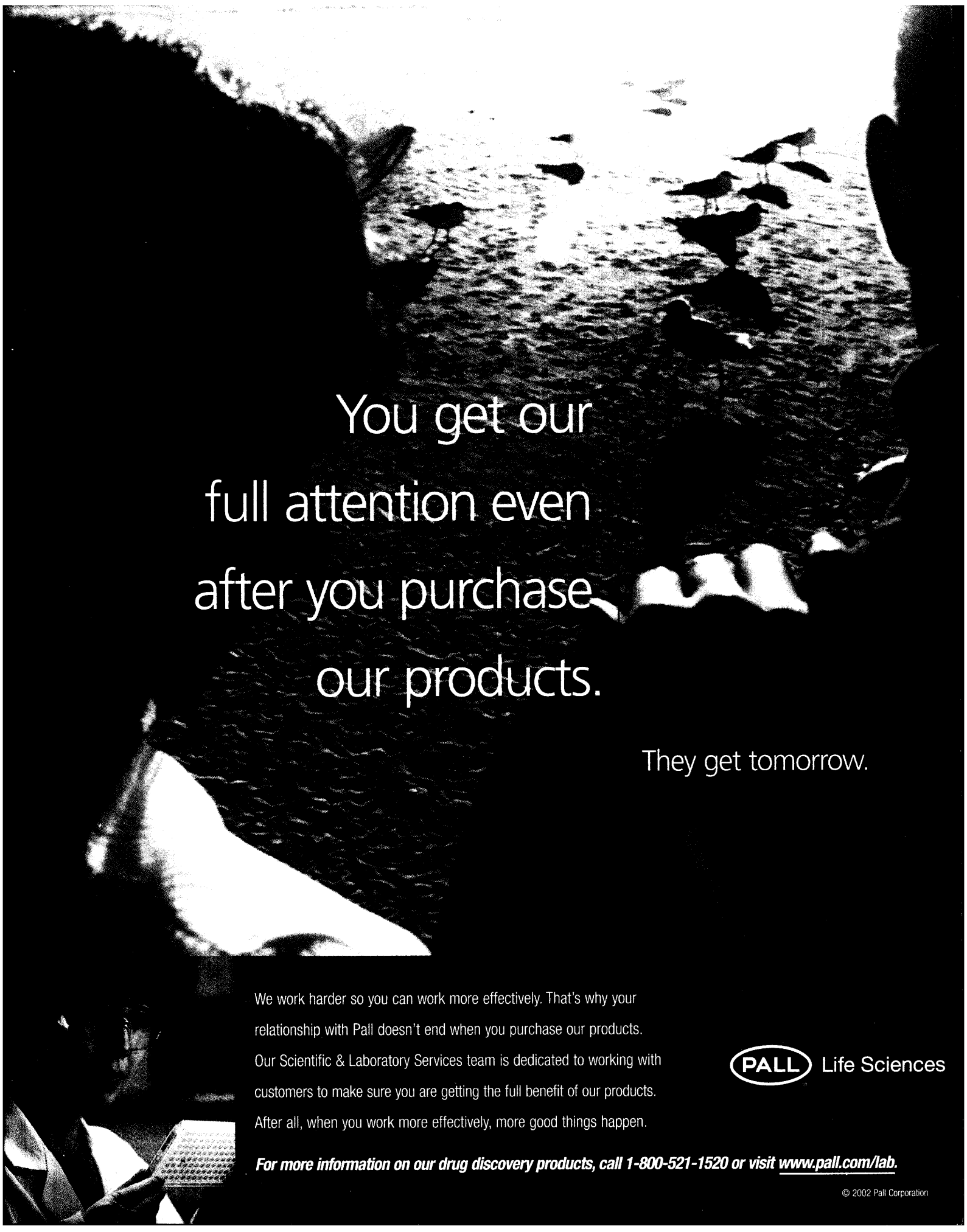
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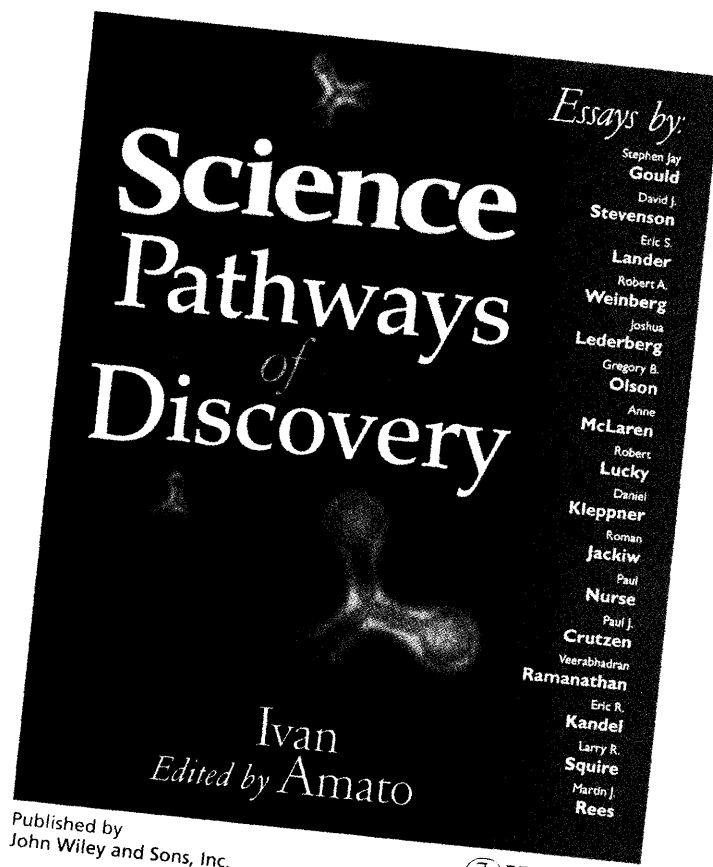
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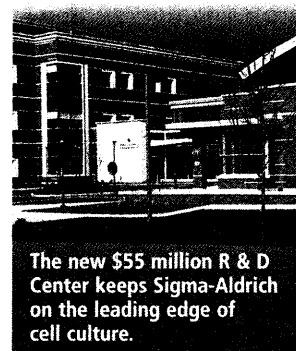


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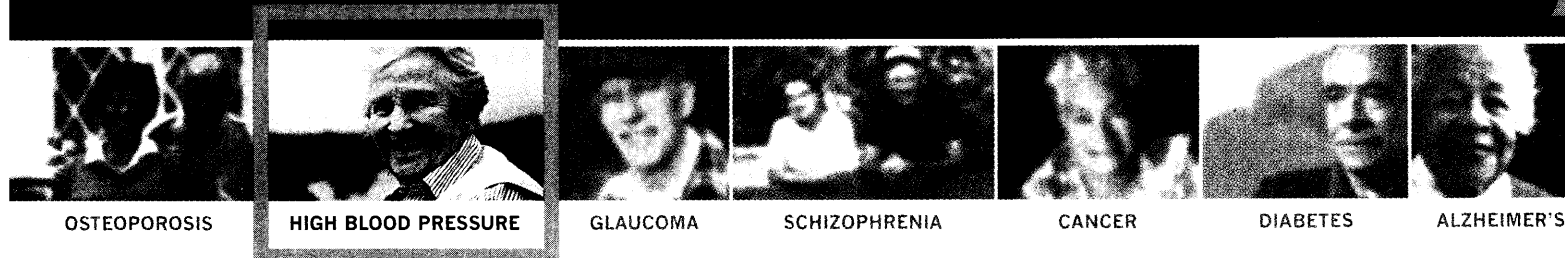
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\* For the purpose of this prize, molecular biology is defined as "that part of biology which attempts to interpret biological events in terms of the physico-chemical properties of molecules in a cell" (McGraw-Hill Dictionary of Scientific and Technical Terms, 4th Edition).

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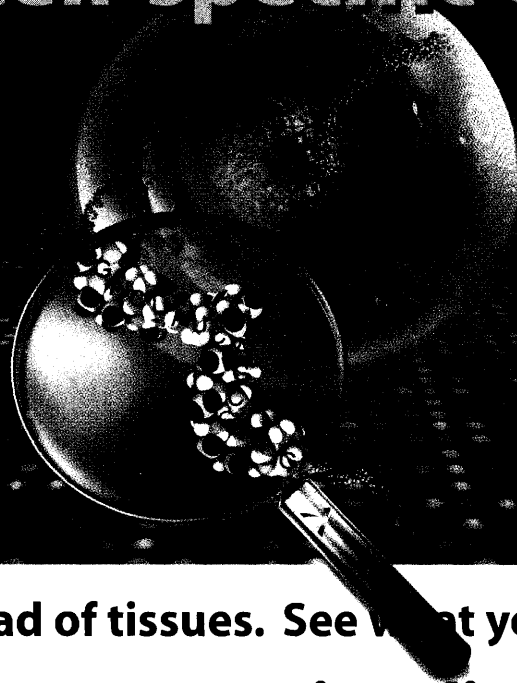
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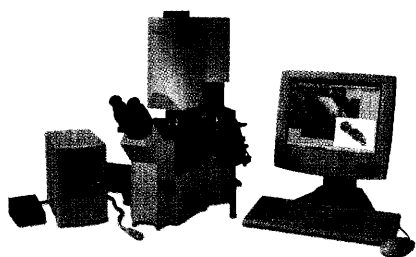
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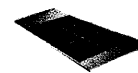
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