NETWATCH

edited by MITCH LESLIE

RESOURCES

Anatomy of a Blob

Although it looks like the unappetizing product of a really big sneeze, the cellular slime mold *Dictyostelium* has biologists all aquiver. Cancer researchers are keen to divine how slime mold cells move in hopes of better understanding the spread of cancer. Evolutionists are puzzling over the division of labor within the spore-launching fruiting body (above), formed when the normally hermitlike cells band together.

At DictyBase, a community site created by cell biologist Rex Chisholm of Northwestern University in Chicago, novices and aficionados alike will find a trove of resources on this slime mold. Sections include a tutorial on *Dictyostelium* biology, a directory of researchers and labs, a newsletter highlighting new papers, and a bibliography. The site also links to data from the *Dictyostelium* genome project.

dictybase.org

EDUCATION

Survey Says ...

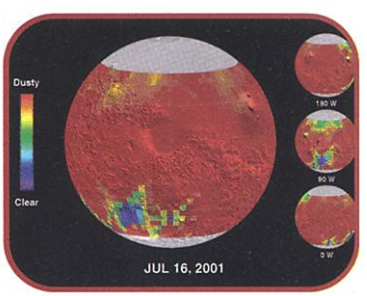
If you explain that scientists want to use "extra embryos" that would otherwise be "discarded" to "find treatments," then 58% of the public is all for funding stem cell research. But change the wording to say "live embryos" would be "destroyed" for "experiments," and support plummets. That's one tidbit from a new Web guide to medical research issues from Public Agenda, a think tank in New York City, and the Lasker Foundation. Aimed mainly at policy-makers and the public, the site offers background on hot issues—like the research budget, drug prices, and genetic testing—along with piles of survey results and interesting factoids. For instance, pneumonia and tuberculosis were the top killers in 1900, when life expectancy was only 49.

www.publicagenda.org

MOVIES

Extreme Weather

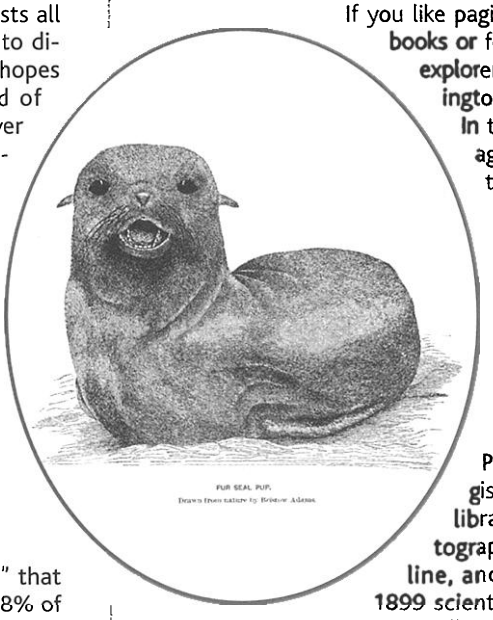
Tomorrow's forecast: Choking dust clouds will continue to blanket the area, with temperatures soaring to a sizzling 20°C above normal. On Mars, that is, where a gigantic cloak of heat-trapping dust has spread over almost the entire planet since mid-June (the red region at right). Using infrared readings from the Mars Global Surveyor satellite, this site tracks the expansion of the cloud, offering time-lapse movies and regular updates. The largest dust storm in over 20 years is more than a martian curiosity—temperature changes there may help elucidate global warming on Earth, says Thermal Emission Spectrometer project leader Philip Christensen of Arizona State University in Tempe.



tes.la.asu.edu

IMAGES

Pacific Retrospective



If you like paging through old natural history books or following the steps of scientific explorers, try the University of Washington Libraries Digital Collections.* In the Freshwater and Marine Image Bank, you can browse more than 2500 photos, drawings, and paintings from rare works published in the 18th to early 20th centuries. Topics include fish, marine mammals, vessels, and traditional fishing practices from far-flung places. An artist sketched this fur seal pup (left) during an 1898 exploration of the North Pacific by renowned ichthyologist David Starr Jordan. The digital library also holds over 250 photographs of Alaskan glaciers, coastline, and Native Americans from an 1899 scientific expedition led by Edward Harriman. Follow a team retracing the famous voyage this summer at this PBS site.†

* content.lib.washington.edu
† www.pbs.org/harriman

DATA

A Deluge of Water Information

Has the Rio Grande run dry again this year? Which parts of the country are seeing the highest stream flows? Find out at this site from the U.S. Geological Survey, a compilation of data on water flow, depth, and quality from a whopping 1.5 million locales throughout the U.S. and Puerto Rico. Since last mentioned in NetWatch (27 August 1999, p. 1323), the site has been revamped and now offers real-time readings for both surface waters, such as streams and rivers, and groundwater. For variables like flow rate and depth, you can get daily, monthly, and yearly trends, as well as historical values. The site also dispenses water-quality data, including levels of minerals and algae-feeding nutrients like phosphorus.

water.usgs.gov/nwis

Science ONLINE

To supplement this week's special section on Ecology Through Time, *Science* Online has prepared a collection of Web resources. Links include a guide to the Web offerings of the U.S. and international Long Term Ecological Research initiatives, general resources on historical ecology and paleoecology, and sites on computational ecology and ecological time series data.

www.sciencemag.org/feature/data/ecology2001.shtml

Send great Web site suggestions to netwatch@aaas.org

CREDITS: (TOP) P. FREY; *FUR SEALS AND FUR-SEAL ISLANDS OF THE NORTH PACIFIC OCEAN*; THERMAL EMISSION SPECTROMETER PROJECT