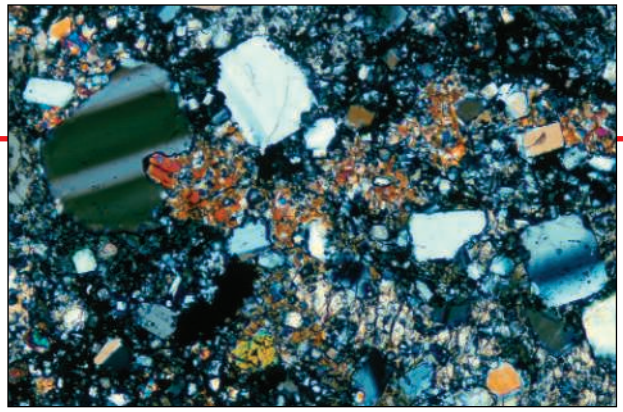
NetWatch

edited by Mitch Leslie



IMAGES

Shooting the Moon

In the last year, the moon has put on a show for earthly observers, with two eclipses. If the events have whetted your appetite for lunar images, this pair of sites will allow you to explore the moon on large and small scales. The gallery* from the Lunar and Planetary Institute in Houston, Texas, supplies a digital version of NASA's classic 1971 atlas, a compilation of photos snapped by the Lunar Orbiter missions. Armchair astronauts can search for the 114-km-across H. G. Wells crater, the pockmarked Mare Australis, and other surface features. You can also browse the text of the original atlas.

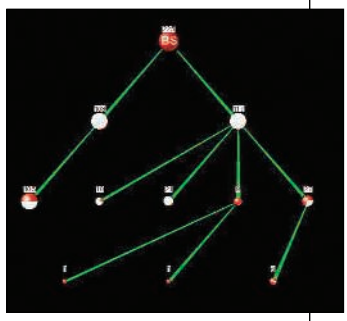
We think of the moon as gray, but under a microscope some of its rocks are surprisingly colorful. For a sample, check out this primer† on moon rocks and soil from geologist Kurt Hollocher of Union College in Schenectady, New York. The multicolored speckles above come from impact melt breccia, rock that partially melted when a meteorite or other wandering object slammed into the moon.

*www.lpi.usra.edu/research/lunar_orbiter

† www.union.edu/PUBLIC/GEODEPT/COURSES/petrology/moon_rocks/index.htm

TOOLS

Protein Sorter



Proteomic and genomic experiments pour out long lists of proteins. Researchers who need help comparing these proteins and figuring out what they do can open PANDORA, a protein-clustering tool hosted by the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in Israel. Users enter the proteins from their experiment, and then PANDORA gathers descriptions of the entries from other databases and uses them to parcel the molecules into smaller groups. The procedure "grabs the big picture," says co-creator Michal Linial of Hebrew University. For example, proteins that clump together in the analysis may also work together to perform a specific task or may congregate in the cell.

www.pandora.cs.huji.ac.il

EDUCATION

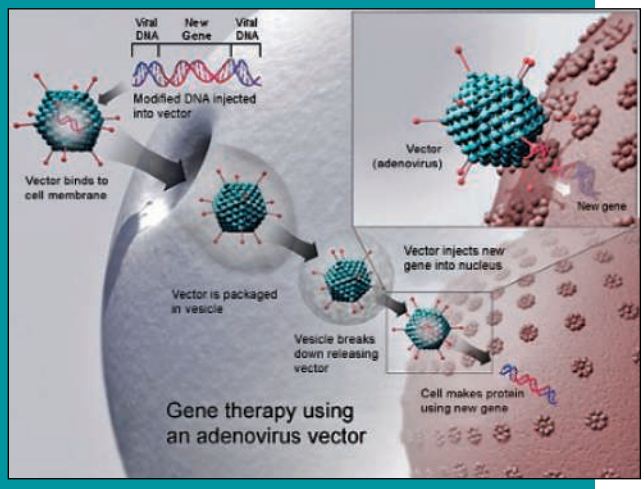
Chemistry Behind the Headlines

A researcher who submits a paper to a journal knows it has to pass the scrutiny of other scientists. The Web site Chemistry Is in the News gives students the chance to put their work through peer review while thinking and writing about science's role in current issues, from global warming to OxyContin addiction. Run by chemist Rainer Glaser of the University of Missouri, Columbia, and colleagues, the site provides guidelines to help students write reports about science-related stories that appear in the press. After exploring, say, the chemistry of the ozone-depleting pesticide methyl bromide and its possible effects on society, students can then post their efforts for evaluation by their classmates or students at other universities. In most science courses, says Glaser, "students are not challenged to think in broad terms and write about it." Teachers can apply to join the four universities already participating.

ciitn.missouri.edu/testsite/www/ciitn_main.html

EDUCATION

When Genes Go Bad



This primer on genetic diseases from the U.S. National Library of Medicine can serve as a reference for students and help teachers catch up on the latest findings. The goal of the Genetics Home Reference is to bridge a gap between researchers and genomics newbies, says project director Alexa McCray: "We were well aware of the wonderful things that have happened as a result of the human genome project, but there was no system that translated that information so that members of the public could understand it."

The handbook section explains topics such as inheritance, different kinds of mutations, genetic testing, and gene therapy. (Above, a virus toting modified DNA slips into a cell.) Users can learn about the genes responsible for illnesses and read up on some 100 conditions, from Alzheimer's disease (certain forms stem from mutations) to X-linked sideroblastic anemia, in which patients make too little hemoglobin. You can browse the descriptions by gene, condition, or chromosome. For readers who want to delve deeper, links lead to technical resources such as PubMed abstracts and gene reviews written for clinicians.

ghr.nlm.nih.gov/ghr/page/Home

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

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Published by AAAS