

Science on the Air

Check your local listings for exact times and dates.
(R) indicates a repeat broadcast.

Nov. 4 (PBS) Innovation — “What Makes Us Tick?” Are there genetic reasons why some people gravitate toward risky lines of work or play? Explores research suggesting that this may indeed be the case — that some children are born timid, and that men and women in certain cultures seem to have a genetic tendency toward heightened levels of violence.

Nov. 4 (PBS) Nature — “Gorillas” Travels to the heart of equatorial Africa to find the endangered mountain gorilla, an extremely rare species whose numbers are rapidly dwindling.

Nov. 4 (PBS) Seasons of Life — “Early Adulthood” Follows the human social clock from the early 20s — a time when people typically formulate their long-range dreams, separate from their families and begin a lifelong quest for fulfillment — to age 40.

Nov. 5 (PBS) The American Experience — “The Satellite Sky” This unnarrated documentary uses kinescopes, science fiction movies, newsreels, radio broadcasts and never-before-aired Soviet footage to evoke the early years of the U.S.-Soviet space race.

Nov. 5 (PBS) Fire on the Rim — “Stories from the Earth” Explores the fascinating ways in which cultures past and present have attempted to cope with the Earth's unpredictable workings by weaving tales of geological disaster into myths and legends.

Nov. 6 (PBS) Nova — “Earthquake!” Examines the high-stakes quest to predict earthquakes. Despite past disappointments, geologists still hope for new clues.

Nov. 11 (PBS) Nature — “The Sisterhood” Examines the spotted hyena, one of Africa's most maligned and least understood animals. Although its shabby appearance, demonic “laugh” and reputation for scavenging do not command the respect bestowed on the big cats, the hyena is also an extremely efficient predator.

Nov. 11 (PBS) Innovation — “Beat the Clock” Looks at medical evidence suggesting that everyone has a “biological clock.”

Nov. 11 (PBS) Seasons of Life — “Middle Adulthood” Follows the human experience from ages 40 to 60, a period when biological and social clocks begin to tick more quietly and the psychological clock gets louder.

Nov. 12 (PBS) Fire on the Rim — “The Prediction Problem” Emphasizes that the prediction of major geologic events remains an imperfect art, despite modern technology and centuries of efforts to foresee impending catastrophes such as earthquakes and volcanic eruptions.

Nov. 13 (PBS) Nova — “Killing Machines” Investigates the proliferation of robotic weapons that seek out and destroy ships, planes and other targets, and ponders a possible end to superpower “invincibility.”

Nov. 18 (PBS) Nature — “Supersense” Innovative filming techniques simulate the sensory experiences of animals.

Nov. 18 (PBS) Seasons of Life — “Late Adulthood” Looks at life's final season, the years beyond age 60. An increase in life expectancy has added a whole new phase to existence: retirement. The psychological clock continues its dominance, and as the end of life seems to come into view, individuals typically work to achieve a sense of integrity.

Nov. 18 (PBS) Innovation — “Animals: How Smart Are They?” Focuses on animal intelligence and communication abilities. Highlights recent research on sign and sound language in chimps and dolphins.

Nov. 19 (PBS) Fire on the Rim — “Preparing for Disaster” Looks at the many methods devised for surviving natural disasters, including the advanced engineering techniques of contemporary New Zealand and the age-old techniques of Japanese volcano-watchers.

Nov. 20 (PBS) Antarctica: Frozen Ambitions Examines the future of the Antarctic Treaty, which expires in 1991, and questions whether the treaty's ideals — the pursuit of science, peace and international cooperation — can withstand the realities of international politics.

Nov. 20 (PBS) Nova — “Can the Elephant Be Saved?” Explores controversial strategies to save the world's largest land animal from extinction.

Nov. 21 (PBS) After the Warming Using an innovative feature called the virtual reality model, a computer simulates the environment in the year 2050. In this scenario, the Earth and its inhabitants have survived global warming.

Nov. 28 (PBS) The Infinite Voyage — “Sail On, Voyager!” Pays tribute to the Voyager I and II missions, whose planetary explorations vastly extended scientific knowledge. Reveals the untold stories of scientists who have dedicated more than a decade to these missions.

Books

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The Coming Quake: Science and Trembling on the California Earthquake Frontier — T.A. Heppenheimer. An in-depth study of California earthquakes of the past, present and future. Describes the history of earthquake prediction, what scientists can and cannot predict about quakes, and scenarios for using technology to control them. Focuses on the looming “Big One.” Originally published in hardcover in 1988 by Time Books. Paragon Hse, 1990, 290 p., illus., paperback, \$12.95.

Colliding Galaxies: The Universe in Turmoil — Barry Parker. A lucid portrayal of scientists' efforts to determine the structure and behavior of our violent universe. Parker, an award-winning science writer, reviews such phenomena as black holes, quasars, and colliding and exploding galaxies, illustrating the turbulent activity of the universe and even of our own galaxy. Plenum Pub, 1990, 298 p., illus., hardcover, \$23.95.

The Curious Cook: More Kitchen Science and Lore — Harold McGee. In this engaging and informative collection of food science and lore, the author of *On Food and Cooking* picks up where he left off, addressing such culinary curiosities as why pesto sauce turns brown and how to prevent the discoloration, whether hot water freezes faster than cool water, and why you get oil spatters on the inside surface of your glasses when frying foods. Also discusses dietary controversies surrounding heart disease, cancer and Alzheimer's disease. N Point Pr, 1990, 339 p., illus., hardcover, \$19.95.

Medical Tests and Diagnostic Procedures: A Patient's Guide to Just What the Doctor Ordered — Philip Shtasel. How does a CAT scan work? What's a mediastinoscopy? Will it hurt? Who will be in the room with me? How long will it take? Will I be hospitalized? This sympathetic guide to diagnostic procedures performed in 16 medical specialties, including ophthalmology, pulmonology, gynecology and nephrology, is a helpful resource for anyone faced with, or intrigued by, the bewildering array of modern medical tests. Har-Row, 1990, 316 p., charts, hardcover, \$22.50.

Our Universe: An Armchair Guide — Michael Rowan-Robinson. Richly illustrated with paintings, literary quotations, historical astronomical records and full-color telescope photographs, this book takes the reader on a journey into space and into the history of humans' relationship with the stars. Descriptions of 20 famous astronomical objects, such as Comet Halley, the Andromeda nebula and the Virgo cluster, introduce the lay reader to modern astronomical theories and insights, and then reach into myths, legends and written or illustrated historical records to examine how our ancestors interpreted the same phenomena. W H Freeman, 1990, 177 p., color/b&w illus., hardcover, \$24.95.