

Science on the Air

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

Dec. 2 (PBS) Nature — “Supersense: Making Sense” Explores the internal clocks of animals, from the daily cycle of eating and sleeping to the perception of time's passage throughout life.

Dec. 2 (PBS) Innovation — “Animals in the Middle” (R) Visits an ongoing project at Johns Hopkins University in which researchers are examining alternatives to animal testing, drawing upon advances in computer programming, biotechnology and tissue culture.

Dec. 4 (PBS) Nova — “In the Land of the Llamas” Profiles four members of the camel family: the llama, alpaca, vicuna and guanaco. These animals, at one time nearly extinct, are now exceptionally well adapted to life in the high Andes.

Dec. 9 (PBS) Nature — “Monkey Island” Looks at social relationships among a troupe of rhesus monkeys living on the island of Cayo Santiago, near Puerto Rico (SN: 11/3/90, p.280).

Dec. 9 (PBS) Innovation — “Creature Comforts” (R) Examines updated exhibits at the San Diego Zoo and visits the Woodland Park Zoo in Seattle and the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans.

Dec. 10 (PBS) Three Flags Over Everest Profiles the Peace Climb 1990 expedition, the most successful climb of Mount Everest in recorded history. This team of U.S., Soviet and Chinese climbers demonstrated that people of different nationalities can cooperate to achieve common goals.

Dec. 11 (PBS) Food for Thought Explores global environmental effects of the Western meat-based diet, citing the arguments of scientists who contend that a modern diet based primarily on animals diverts excessive resources to the raising of livestock.

Dec. 12 (PBS) Scientific American Frontiers Examines an ant species that invades and enslaves other ant colonies using smell as the ultimate weapon of control. Other featured topics include: the work of scientists who measure the mass, depth, pressure and water flow beneath and through Switzerland's mighty glaciers; the national science olympiad for high schoolers; research that reveals whales' distinctive dialects; and the joint efforts of physicians, physicists and computer scientists at Harvard University who have adapted existing technology to devise a new way of eliminating brain tumors.

Dec. 13 (PBS) Arctic Wars Looks at environmental issues affecting the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, at Alaska's extreme northeast boundary.

Dec. 16 (PBS) Innovation — “Fighting for the Animals” (R) Reports on the role played by scientific research in preserving the planet's endangered animals. Focuses on a worldwide campaign to save the giant panda, as well as efforts in New Jersey to help protect endangered birds of prey.

Dec. 16 (PBS) Nature — “Grizzly Country” Travels to Alaska's Denali National Park, where some 30,000 grizzlies roam the wilderness and where park rangers give hikers special training to prepare them for close encounters with the bears. Also visits Brook Falls in Alaska's Katmai National Park to watch grizzlies fish for salmon.

Dec. 18 (PBS) Nova — “What's Killing the Children?” Tracks a fatal disease that suddenly attacked the children of a small Brazilian town, and follows the efforts of researchers from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control who were called in to crack the case.

Dec. 23 (PBS) Innovation — “Oh, My Aching Head” (R) Examines a new mix of diagnostic equipment that now gives hope to many headache sufferers.

Dec. 23 (PBS) Nature — “A Wolf in the Fold” (R) Highlights the remarkable modern partnership of domestic dogs and sheep, comparing and contrasting it with the wild animals' predator/prey relationship of 11,000 years ago. Shows how humans have developed the sheepdog through selective breeding and how the distinctive qualities of this species make it a natural bodyguard for one of humankind's most valuable animal resources.

Dec. 27 (PBS) Atlantic Realm (R) Explores the geology and natural history of the Atlantic Ocean, displaying rare underwater footage produced in cooperation with major oceanographic institutions and their research vessels.

Dec. 30 (PBS) Innovation — “Getting the Lead Out” (R) Discusses lead as an environmental problem and examines the effects of lead poisoning on the kidneys and nervous system.

Dec. 30 (PBS) Nature — “The Colorado” (R) Traces the course of the Colorado River from its source in the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado and Wyoming to its terminus in the sun-drenched salt flats near Mexico's Sea of Cortez.

Books

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The Devouring Fungus: Tales of the Computer Age — Karla Jennings. An entertaining anthology of computer cartoons, folklore and mythology, written for anyone who has ever had anything to do with computers. Traces the development of the computer and the evolution of computer culture, presenting dozens of jokes and tales about the computer's infiltration of society. Includes chapters on “compuspeak,” computer hacking and electronic viruses. Norton, 1990, 237 p., illus., hardcover, \$19.95, paperback, \$10.95.

I Love Nature More — Robert Vavra. Dozens of images compiled by this internationally acclaimed photographer highlight the spectacular designs, textures and colors found in nature's “living art.” Vavra's color photographs capture the okapi's graceful stripes, the leopard's elusive spots and the pearly brilliance of an abalone shell, each accompanied by a lyrical quotation representing the “voice” of the subject itself. The book includes several examples of photographer Kjell Sandved's butterfly alphabet (SN: 6/16/90, p.376) and concludes with informative comments on each image. Morrow, 1990, 80 p., color illus., hardcover, \$24.95.

An Old Man's Toy: Gravity at Work and Play in Einstein's Universe — A. Zee. This witty and informative book introduces the physics of gravity and of cosmological phenomena involving gravity, while exploring the ways in which gravitational implications continue to confound modern physicists and influence our understanding of the origins of the universe. Zee, a physicist, provides lucid, well-illustrated explanations of such concepts as the Big Bang, antimatter, the grand unified theory and superstring theory. Originally published in hardcover in 1989. Macmillan, 1990, 272 p., illus., paperback, \$9.95.

The Paradoxicon — Nicholas Falletta. Explores the nature of paradoxes and paradoxical reasoning through a diverse collection of visual, logical, mathematical and scientific puzzles. Individual chapters focus on specific types of problems — including visual illusions, time paradoxes, the paradoxical drawings of M.C. Escher and the classic prisoner's dilemma — and analyze historic attempts to resolve them. Supplemented with more than 120 illustrations, this book provides a challenging test of the limits of the reader's own logic. Wiley, 1990, 230 p., illus., paperback, \$10.95.

The Vanished Library — Luciano Canfora. The legend of the Library of Alexandria — established by the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt to house all books ever written — has mystified scholars for centuries: What was this library? And where? Canfora, a historian and specialist in ancient literature, offers his interpretation of the great library's creation, its 900-year existence and its eventual disappearance. Brief chapters written as anecdotes and reconstructions give the book the feel of a novel, but all are based on historical and literary sources. U of Cal Pr, 1990, 207 p., hardcover, \$19.95, paperback, \$11.95.