



Matthew Borhowski

Humankind has puzzled over the eternal questions of existence for millennia. Where did the universe come from? Where did we come from? How does the cycle of life from birth to death repeat itself? What is our relation to the other living creatures on Earth? We have sought answers to such questions through religion, art, philosophy, and

science. Indeed, the more we learn about human cultures, both past and present, the more we appreciate the timelessness and universality of this endeavor.

Many of the natural laws underlying science and mathematics were discovered thousands of years ago by scholars in China, Egypt, Greece, and elsewhere. In the ensuing centuries, scientists moved from observation of natural laws to an understanding of how those laws operate. Inevitably, they began to use this understanding as a tool to modify the human condition—for better and for worse—and to manipulate the world around them.

Today's scientists are continuing to examine the unchanging verities of human existence. Building on the accomplishments of earlier scientists, they are developing new methodologies, new hypotheses and theories, and new, interdisciplinary approaches. With their armamentarium of knowledge about astronomy, physics, chemistry,

biology, and mathematics, scientists are turning their attention to even more complex systems: the effect of human activities on the biosphere; the relationship of land, oceans, and atmosphere; the means by which cells communicate; the recesses of the human mind—memory, consciousness, behavior; chaos, in its many mathematical and biological guises.

Science has become far more complex and specialized in modern times, but it holds the same appeal and promise for humankind that it always has—which is why *SCIENCE NEWS* is able to celebrate its 75th anniversary this year. The magazine was begun at a time when scientists worried that their work was increasingly misunderstood by nonscientists. With its clear, concise, accurate reporting of the latest findings and theories, *SCIENCE NEWS* has served and will continue to serve as a bridge between scientists and thoughtful, curious people everywhere.

Albert Einstein said, "All our science, measured against reality, is primitive and childlike—and yet it is the most precious thing we have." As we celebrate our diamond anniversary at *SCIENCE NEWS*, we reaffirm our purpose—to advance the understanding of science. In this way, we can make it easier for our readers to use Einstein's "most precious thing" to seek answers to those eternal questions.

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A Taxonomy of Images

Over 100 photographs drawn from the thousands housed in the Science Service Archives at the National Museum of American History of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., will be on view at the International Center of Photography in New York from March 28 through June 22.

The exhibition examines the relationship between photography and science and the visual iconography that has developed in documenting scientific research. The images were distributed to newspapers by Science Service and were used in *SCIENCE NEWS LETTER* (the predecessor of *SCIENCE NEWS*) from the 1920s through the 1960s.

At left, according to the caption that accompanied the photo: "Research on the Common Cold. Bacteriologist Maxine McCall of the common cold unit, National Institutes of Health, inspects tubes of normal egg fluids and cold-infected fluids that have been subjected to the tryptophanperchloric acid test and are ready for final measurement of optical density in the Beckman spectrophotometer. The colorless fluid in the tube at the left is the control tube. The fluid in the other tube is colored pinkish brown, indicating the presence of cold virus in the original allatoic fluid."

At right: "Man-made Lightning. Professor Charles R. Vail holds a piece of oak wood which has been split by Duke University's man-made lightning, as he places another in position to be shattered. The pair of spheres in the background is used to measure voltage."

