

SCIENCE NEWS®

The Weekly Newsmagazine of Science

Volume 156, No. 9, August 28, 1999

This Week

- 132 Ancient Apes May Have Branched Out
Bruce Bower
- 132 Turkish earthquake: A wobbly domino falls
Richard Monastersky
- 133 Pokey pulsar mystifies astronomers
Siri Carpenter
- 134 Treasure hunt unearths cholesterol gene
John Travis
- 134 Antibodies may treat overdoses, addiction
Corinna Wu
- 135 Breaking the code on chicken clucks
Susan Millius
- 135 Drastic measures combat heart attack shock
Nathan Seppa

Articles

- 136 Acclimating to a Warmer World
With some climate change unavoidable,
researchers focus on adaptation
Richard Monastersky
- 142 Mind over Matter
Brain-driven prostheses move from
science fiction to science
Damaris Christensen

Letters

No blanket answer on EMFs

The biological effects of electric and magnetic fields remain questionable ("EMFs—doubts linger over possible links," SN: 7/31/99, p. 12). Has anyone specifically checked the electric bed-blanket?

*A.C. English
Delray Beach, Fla.*

Several research teams have investigated risks that might stem from spending long periods under electric blankets. We covered some of this research back in the late 1980s (SN: 2/14/87, p. 108) and reported that manufacturers were reengineering blanket wiring to reduce a sleeper's exposures to electric and magnetic fields (SN: 8/21/93, p. 126). To date, however, data appear equivocal on whether any health risks exist.

—J. Raloff

Grant some glory

I'm troubled by an omission in the otherwise excellent article "Old glory, new glory" (SN: 6/26/99, p. 408). It is my understanding that significant initial funding for the proj-

ect was provided by Ralph Lauren. Many scholarly or scientific endeavors require outside support. There are all manner of motives for providing such support, but recognition is a powerful one. Where credit is due, as it certainly is to Ralph Lauren here, it should be given.

*Tom Fenton
New York, N.Y.*

Polo Ralph Lauren Corp. contributed \$10 million to the project through the Save America's Treasures program, a partnership between the White House Millennium Council and the National Trust for Historic Preservation. The Pew Charitable Trusts pledged \$5 million, and Congress appropriated \$3 million. Additional funds came from the John S. and James L. Knight foundation.

—C. Wu

Artificial explanation

"Nocturnal spider favors artificial lights" (SN: 6/26/99, p. 407) is extremely interesting, and Astrid Heiling is to be congratulated on her imaginative work. However, artificial electrical lighting is over a century old. Adding on the gaslight era pushes the era of

artificial lighting to perhaps 2 centuries. That would represent at least 150 generations of spiders. Is it any wonder that natural selection has caused an adaption orienting spiders to build their orbs in artificial light? The hypothesis of the adaption being based on moonlight reflected on water seems quite weak relative to an adaptive response to human presence.

*John H. Brown
Georgia Southern University
Statesboro, Ga.*

"Don't you dare"

Regarding the Neandertal spear point found in the neck of a wild ass ("Neandertal hunters get to the point," SN: 7/3/99, p. 4), it cannot be known that this was from an attack on the animal. It could have been an already dead animal into which a Neandertal might have jabbed his spear to proclaim ownership. Or, he might have been trying to remove the head. Nonetheless, an interesting find.

*Dennis D. Gaunt
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa*

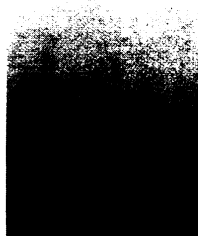
Research Notes

- 139 Archaeology
Hey, Pharaoh, make way for the mayor
- 139 Biology
Feeding hormone finds its partner
Estrogen may ward off cataracts
Add three genes, get one cancer cell
- 141 Paleobiology
Earliest evidence of complex life
Cancer in the Jurassic ward
- 141 Technology
New battery feeds electron-hungry iron
Targeting yammering jackhammering

Departments

- 130 Books
- 131 Letters

Cover: How would the United States fare if the Dust Bowl conditions of the 1930s returned? Scientists are now exploring how society can adapt to both natural climate shifts and changes associated with global warming. **Page 136** (Archive/America)



Visit SCIENCE NEWS ONLINE for special features, columns, and references.

<http://www.sciencenews.org>