

This Millennium

- iv Myriad Monsters Confirmed in Water Droplets
Susan Milius
- iv With new vaccine, scientist prevents rabies in boys
Nathan Seppa
- v Gravity tugs at the center of a priority battle
Ivars Peterson
- vi A million healing words flow from compendium
Janet Raloff
- vi Messy pilgrims blamed for puzzling fossils
Richard de Monastersky
- vii Danish astronomer argues for a changing cosmos
Ron Cowen
- vii Weights make haste: Lighter linger
Peter Weiss
- viii Imagine that: Animal magnetism exposed
Bruce Bower
- viii Monk learns secrets of heredity from pea plants
John Travis
- x Author's notes

Article

- ix **The 2-Million-Year-Old Man Speaks**
A Stone Age survivor ponders Y2K and more
Bruce Bower

Departments

- ii Books
- iii Editor's Letter



Cover: Instrumentation for scientific progress: (clockwise from upper left) A French microscope (Image: National Library of Medicine), a multipurpose navigational device, the "Millionaire" desktop calculator, and Sir Isaac Newton's reflecting telescope (Images: The Smithsonian Institution).

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

<http://www.sciencenews.org>

Editor's Letter

With the approach of the year 2000 and the accompanying trepidations about hardware and software, all eyes have turned to the computers. These machines suddenly have formed three completely separate classes: those new enough to be Y2K compliant, those that can be upgraded to limp into next year, and those so old that they will never work after Dec. 31. The questions confronted by all users: What files are on those aged computers, and will anyone miss them when they're gone?

Here at SCIENCE NEWS, we made a startling discovery when we revved up some ancient computers abandoned in dark corners, covered with yellowed press releases, take-out menus, and dusty umbrellas dating back to days of yore. Among the files were stories

written in the distant past. They date back to centuries before the earliest known issues of SCIENCE NEWS, yet the writers of those pieces had the same, or almost the same, names as members of our current staff. Strange.

Since it's so difficult to get a feel for the real advances in science from history books, we decided to share with you a portion of these manuscripts—and book recommendations, too. This special section of the final 1999 issue of SCIENCE NEWS contains a more or less random selection of science news stories written on the scene during earlier periods of the millennium.

We feel obliged to point out that some of those early journalists took a few more liberties than professional science writers do today. Although they wouldn't have dreamed of fabricating data, some turned a bit fanciful when it came to quotations. Others

tended to rearrange the timing of events for the betterment of the story line. Luckily, however, these writers left notes to guide the reader through the forgotten narratives. We give you a condensed version of their hints on page x, and a fuller description appears on SCIENCE NEWS ONLINE (<http://www.sciencenews.org>).

Bringing the past into the present, this issue also contains a rare interview with the 2-Million-Year-Old Man. Behavioral science writer Bruce Bower, armed with his trusty tape recorder, goes head to head with a walking, talking, wise-cracking ancient hominid.

So, take your mind off your own computer worries and enjoy these pages. Whatever else happens, the printed word will survive well into the next millennium.

—Julie Ann Miller
Editor