

IN BRIEF

Creative solutions are now being sought to the so-called two-body problem—the difficulty that scientist couples face when seeking jobs in the same location. It's a problem that affects a large percentage of physicists and other scientists, and it therefore also affects the institutions where they hope to work, says University of North Carolina physicist Laurie McNeil. To get a better grasp of the problem, she and Marc Sher, of the College of William and Mary, have devised an on-line survey (accessible on the World Wide Web at <http://physics.wm.edu/survey>), which they encourage anyone who has had experience with dual-science-career couples to complete. "It's not just to complain," McNeil says. "We also want to learn about some of the creative solutions that people and institutions have tried." The survey will remain on the Web through mid-June, she says, and the results will then be disseminated "as widely as possible."

Mammoth bones have been found at the construction site of the National Ignition Facility, in Livermore, California. Part of a skull, three vertebrae, a leg bone, some ribs and a tusk were discovered 30–35 feet below ground, says C. Bruce Hanson, the paleontologist who directed the excavation. Fragments of mammoth have been found in the area before, Hanson



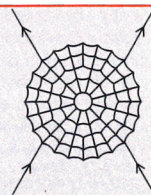
adds, but "it's rare to find so many elements from an individual specimen. This may help us sort out how many species of mammoth there were in this part of California." The remains do not contain enough carbon to date them, but mammoths died out in the area about 10 000 years ago, Hanson says. The first bones were unearthed in December while workers were digging a utility trench at the NIF site. The findings are not expected to delay construction, and the mammoth bones may eventually be put on display at the facility, which is scheduled to be completed in 2003.

Next month, the American Physical Society will launch *Physical Re-*

view Special Topics—Accelerators and Beams, the first of an intended series of peer-reviewed electronic niche journals. *PRST—AB* will cover advances in accelerator design and technology, theoretical and experimental beam physics and applications of accelerators—topics that have until now "been scattered across four or five journals," according to Robert Siemann of the Stanford Linear Accelerator Center, who is the new publication's editor. *PRST—AB* papers will be posted on the World Wide Web upon acceptance, with no charge to either authors or readers; visit <http://publish.aps.org> for more information. Among APS's other electronic projects in the works is one with the running title "Highlights," in which selected papers from *Physical Review Letters* will be summarized with the aim of making them readily understandable to a broad audience of physicists. David Ehrenstein, a biophysicist, is overseeing the project, and the first highlights are due to be posted on the Web later this spring.

At CERN, many staff members are choosing to trim their own pay checks to help the organization pay for new hires. By the start of this year, 1120 individuals—nearly half of those eligible—had volunteered to reduce their annual salaries by up to 10%, accruing 5.5 days of leave per year for each multiple of 2.5% by which they opted to cut their pay; they had banked a total of 1560 such 2.5% "slices," or enough to hire about 37 people. "It is enabling us to keep up a decent level of recruitment and to deal with budget cuts," says CERN's director general, Christopher Llewellyn-Smith. "And it's important psychologically as it shows the commitment of our staff to the scientific mission of the laboratory." According to Derek Ball, vice president of CERN's staff association, this voluntary approach to cutting spending has also improved relations between CERN's staff and management, which became strained last year when the organization unilaterally docked all salaries. (See *PHYSICS TODAY*, August 1997, page 51.) ■

Web Watch



▶ <http://ippex.pppl.gov/ippex/>

IPPEX, the Internet Plasma Physics Education Experience, lets high school students analyze data from real fusion experiments and run their own virtual tokamak. Also included on the site is an introduction to fusion, interactive physics modules on topics such as matter and energy and a question-and-answer section. For the most interesting parts of the site, you'll need a browser that's Shockwave or Java capable. IPPEX is based at the Princeton Plasma Physics Laboratory and is supported by the Center for Improved Engineering and Science Education at the Stevens Institute of Technology in New Jersey.

▶ <http://www.space.lockheed.com/YPOP/>

Yohkoh Public Outreach Project. Based around the Yohkoh satellite's x-ray and gamma-ray studies of the Sun, this site is targeted at K-12 students and the public in general. The site has numerous short movies in multiple formats, including the most recent solar data, comparisons of the Sun in x-ray and white light, studies of flares and footage of a solar eclipse viewed in x rays. The basics of magnetic fields and the electromagnetic spectrum are covered, younger browsers can go "sunbeam surfing" on a hypermedia tour of the Sun and hands-on classroom activities include studies of the solar cycle, image filtering, satellite orbits and a build-it-yourself sundial. The project, funded by NASA, is a collaboration of Montana State University and the Lockheed Martin Solar and Astrophysics Laboratory.

▶ http://web.hep.uiuc.edu/physics_van/van.htm

The Physics Van travels from the physics department at the University of Illinois to elementary and middle schools in the Champaign-Urbana area, where its crew members "perform and explain exciting demonstrations." Schools in the area can fill in an on-line form to request a visit by the Physics Van. Students farther afield can post questions in the Q&A area, and teachers can look through the numerous demonstration descriptions. The Physics Van is supported by the University of Illinois physics department and the State of Illinois.

▶ All links mentioned in Web Watch are included on *PHYSICS TODAY*'s home page, <http://www.aip.org/pt/>. If you have suggestions for other topics or sites to be covered in Web Watch, please e-mail them to ptwww@aip.acp.org.

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