ble Helix (first edition, Atheneum, 1968), that Watson clearly acknowledged the debt he and Crick owed Franklin. Even then, says Elkin, the Franklin described in Watson's book "is unrecognizable by anyone who knew her."

The new medal, which will be presented annually, is open to all UK researchers, male and female. It has one of the largest monetary values of any UK award. That, along with the prestige associated with winning the medal, will "help other brilliant women scientists get the acknowledgment they deserve in their lifetimes," says Patricia Hewitt, the UK's secretary of state for trade and industry. Details on the medal can be found on the Royal Society Web site at http://www.royalsoc.ac.uk. The inaugural medal will be bestowed next year to coincide with the 50th publishing anniversary of Crick and Watson's *Nature* article.


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NEWS NOTES

Bush's answer to Kyoto. Months after refusing to ratify the Kyoto Protocol (see PHYSICS TODAY, January 2002, page 26), the Bush administration has proposed an alternative: a voluntary 18% cut over the next 10 years in "greenhouse gas intensity" (based on the ratio of carbon dioxide emissions to the size of the US economy) instead of reducing overall US CO_2 emissions by 7% through national and international regulations.

Both the Canadian and Australian governments have welcomed the Bush proposal, but elsewhere it has been roundly condemned. "The Kyoto Protocol, with its legally binding targets and timetables, remains the only workable basis for taking forward international action on climate change," says Margaret Beckett, the UK's environment secretary.

Critics, such as the Pew Center on Global Climate Change in Arlington, Virginia, claim that the Bush proposal is just a business-as-usual scenario that will result in a 30% increase in CO_2 emissions from 1990 to 2012. Since 1990, the US emission intensity has dropped by 1.7% per year but CO_2 emissions increased by 12%.

If the US does not reach the proposed 18% cut in emission intensity, Bush promises that "additional measures," will be introduced in 2012.

Meanwhile, the European Union and its allies appear certain to ratify the Kyoto Protocol, bringing it into international law by their self-imposed September 2002 deadline. —PKG

Plutonium conversion. The US will dispose of 34 metric tons of surplus weapons-grade plutonium by converting it into mixed oxide fuel (MOX) for use in commercial nuclear reactors. The decision, announced in late January by Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham, ends the dual-track approach that considered immobilizing the plutonium in glass logs as an alternative to fuel conversion. The elimination of the storage alternative will save about $2 billion, Abraham said.

The surplus plutonium is the result of an agreement signed by the US and Russia in 2000 committing each country to dispose of 34 metric tons of plutonium from their weapons programs. The decision to go with fuel conversion came after the National Security Council staff spent a year reviewing the costs and implications of alternative methods of disposing of the plutonium. "This path forward is workable, technologically possible, and an affordable solution that meets our commitments . . . ," Abraham said. The MOX conversion process is estimated to cost $3.8 billion over 20 years. A number of public interest advocacy groups, led by the Washington-based Nuclear Control Institute, plan to oppose the licensing of the MOX processing plants on the grounds that the plutonium immobilization is safer. —JLD

New degrees for new careers. For scientists who want a career in management or policy-making, three new master's degrees offered at the UK's University of Cambridge may be the way to go. Run jointly by Cambridge and MIT, the one-year programs in technology policy, bioscience enterprise, and environmental engineering and sustainable development combine coursework in fields like economics and international negotiating with politically and socially relevant topics that have a science bent, such as transportation, communications technology, and nuclear waste disposal. The programs aim to train scientists for an expected worldwide increase in the number of industry and government jobs that demand technical knowledge. Holders of bachelor's or higher degrees may apply. Applications are due by 15 May. For more information, visit http://www.cmi.cam.ac.uk/pp/masters. —TF

Web Watch

http://ie.lbl.gov/xray/mainpage.htm

Thanks to Gregory Rech of Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory and his collaborators, you can now use your Web browser to view the **X-ray Spectrum of Elements on the Periodic Table**. You can plot the fluorescent spectrum of each element or, if you prefer, the spectra of two elements simultaneously.

http://www.opticalres.com/kidoptx.html

Bruce Irving of Optical Research Associates in Pasadena, California, has put together **Optics for Kids**, an educational Web site aimed at 6- to 11-year-olds. The site is structured around a series of questions, such as What's cool about lasers? that lead to more detailed information elsewhere.

http://adswww.harvard.edu

With more than 2.8 million freely available abstracts, NASA's **Astrophysics Data System** is the largest noncommercial database of scientific literature in the world. And, thanks to a collaboration with the American Physical Society, ADS, which is hosted by the Harvard–Smithsonian Center for Astrophysics, has recently gotten even bigger. Its core collection of astronomical abstracts and articles is now supplemented with abstracts from the various APS journals.

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please e-mail us at ptwww@aip.org.

Compiled by **CHARLES DAY**