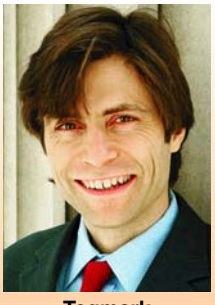
Templeton Foundation. The foundation is known for promoting reconciliation between science and religion, for example through its Templeton Prize. This year's prize was awarded to Townes (see PHYSICS TODAY, April 2005, page 28). "But FQXi's choice of grantees will be fully independent of the Templeton Foundation's philosophical and religious interests," says Tegmark. "The institute is run by scientists, for scientists."



Tegmark

During the program's initial four years, about $6 million will be made available by the foundation in grants to theorists and experimenters. There will also be international conferences, essay contests, and "low-hassle minigrants" for travel and workshops. The emphasis, says Tegmark, will be on novel approaches to fundamental questions that are less likely to get governmental support than more conventional work. The first grant opportunities will soon be announced. Information is available at http://www.fqxi.org. **BMS**

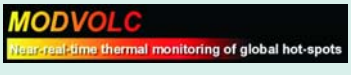
**Postdoc symposium.** Astronomers tapped as likely future leaders in their areas of research convened at the University of Texas at Austin in October to discuss hot topics in astronomy. About three dozen postdocs from across the US and beyond attended the two-and-a-half-day Frank N. Bash Symposium 2005: New Horizons in Astronomy. It was the first of what is intended as a biennial event organized by and featuring postdoctoral researchers.

Bringing postdocs together to talk not about "the nitty-gritty details of everyday research" but about the "overarching themes in our work and work experiences" was very rewarding, says Seth Redfield, one of the UT postdocs involved in organizing the meeting.

The focus on postdocs grew out of a symposium held two years earlier in honor of retiring McDonald Observatory director Frank Bash, for whom the new symposium is named. That time, says UT astronomy professor Dan Jaffe, postdocs were invited as a way to "give our department visibility, learn about the newest discoveries in the field, and give them a chance to spread their wings and give what are in some cases their first review talks." Peter Riley, the associate dean for research and facilities in UT's college of natural sciences, adds that his college hopes other departments will follow suit: "We see this as a way to identify outstanding young people in any field." **TF** ■

## WEB WATCH

**http://modis.higp.hawaii.edu/cgi-bin/modis/modisnew.cgi**




The MODIS imager aboard NASA's *Terra* orbiter views every square kilometer of Earth's surface every two days. Using MODIS infrared data, scientists at the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics and Planetology have produced **MODVOLC**, a continuously updated interactive map of lava fields, volcanic eruptions, and other global hot spots.

**http://www.nsarchive.org**


Based at George Washington University, the **National Security Archive** collects and makes available declassified US documents obtained through the Freedom of Information Act. One of the archive's projects, "China and the Bomb," covers the history of the Chinese nuclear weapons program and US policy regarding it.

**http://hes.lbl.gov**

The **Home Energy Saver** is an online calculator that estimates how much energy your household could save through improvements in efficiency. The calculator, which was developed at Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, relies on sophisticated models of domestic architecture and appliances as well as regional climate data.

To suggest topics or sites for Web Watch, please visit http://www.physicstoday.org/suggestwebwatch.html.

*Compiled and edited by* **Charles Day**