EDUCATION

Scientists on the Record

By instilling a “great faith in mathematical models,” John Maynard Smith’s first career as an airplane designer during World War II prepared him to become one of the 20th century’s premier evolutionary biologists. Although models incorporate unrealistic assumptions, he learned that they can still be “safe enough to trust your life to.” The venerable British scientist is one of 18 researchers, mathematicians, and doctors who recounted their life stories for Peoples Archive. A London-based company has been filming the reminiscences of artists and other luminaries for the site, most of which is now free. The collection preserves the words of several scientists who have died recently, including Maynard Smith, biologists Francis Crick and Ernst Mayr, and physicists Hans Bethe and Edward Teller. >>

www.peoplesarchive.com

EDUCATION

Teach Yourself Physics

At the Net Advance of Physics, you can find out how to derive the Nambu-Jona-Lasinio model of light nuclei, bone up on the motions of objects in the Kuiper belt at the edge of the solar system, and learn about hundreds of other topics. The virtual encyclopedia from Norman Redington of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology links to resources such as Wikipedia, online physics dictionaries, and articles and tutorials in the preprint server arXiv. Recent additions include biographical sketches and other information for audiences of Michael Frayn’s play Copenhagen, about the World War II meeting between Werner Heisenberg and Niels Bohr. >>

web.mit.edu/redingtn/www/netadv/welcome.html

EDUCATION

Thinking Like a Tumor

Inside Cancer, a new primer from the Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory in New York, explains the basics of tumor biology with a snazzy mix of text and multimedia. Start with the Hallmarks of Cancer section to hear experts such as Robert Weinberg of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology talk about the abilities a cell needs to spawn a tumor, which include dodging the immune system and thwarting suicide pathways. In the action-packed Pathways to Cancer animations, visitors wend through a cell’s cluttered interior and plunge into nuclear pores to see how the signaling systems that normally manage division go awry. (Above, a tumor cell tangles with an antibody-spiked B cell.) Other sections explore cancer epidemiology and new treatments. >>

www.insidecancer.org

RESOURCES

Life With Tentacles

This Caribbean reef squid (Sepioteuthis sepioidea) is like a living mood ring. It can transform from plain brown to translucent white to iridescent splendor, depending on whether it’s courting, menacing rivals, or fleeing predators. The Cephalopod Page from marine biologist James Wood of the Bermuda Biological Station for Research profiles some 30 species, from the fickle reef squid to the Pacific giant octopus (Octopus dofleini), whose arm span can reach nearly 10 meters. Cephalopod fans can also browse more than 30 original papers on the creatures’ biology. >>

www.thecephalopodpage.org

EXHIBITS

Home, Sweet Cave >>

Available: Roomy hillside hideaway with commanding views of France’s Tautavel Valley; earth floors; stone ceilings; spacious common area great for butchering and tool-making; convenient to game trails, flint deposits.

These amenities first drew early humans to the Arago cave in southern France nearly 700,000 years ago. At this online exhibit, part of a series on archaeological sites from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication, you can visit the cave and get to know its former tenants. The beetle-browed Homo erectus who moved into the cave—including the famous 450,000-year-old Tautavel man (above)—may have been the ancestors of the Neandertals. The exhibit follows how human use of the cave changed over time, from a temporary hunting camp to a permanent home. Pop-up windows offer a close look at the troglodytes’ tool kit of stone scrapers, choppers, and serrated denticulates for slicing flesh. >>


Send site suggestions to >>

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