

RESOURCES

GOING OUT WITH A BANG

The flash beneath the galaxy NGC 4526 in this 1994 photo is a detonating star. For a roundup of stars that ended their lives explosively, zoom in on the International Supernovae Network* from David Bishop, a computer chip designer and astronomy buff in Rochester, New York. Bishop combs International Astronomical Union reports and other sources to compile the latest and brightest stellar blowups. The listings not only offer observing targets for amateur sky watchers but also supply information useful for professionals, including images, links to spectra, and references.

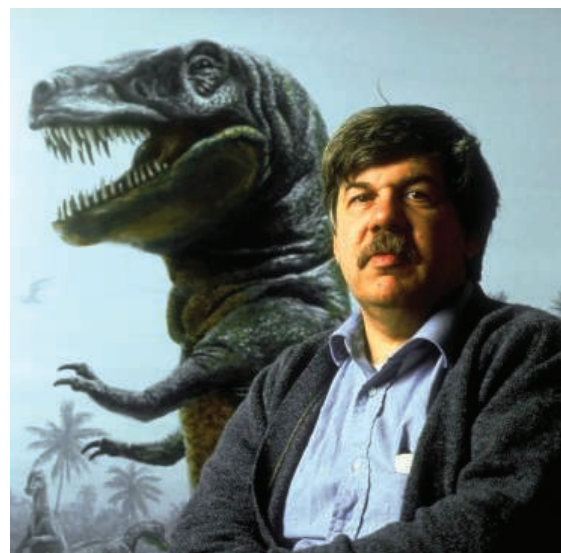
A supernova usually fades within weeks or months, but its remains linger. For a no-frills catalog of so-called supernova remnants, check this site† from astrophysicist David Green of the University of Cambridge in the U.K. >> * www.supernovae.net/isn.htm
† www.mrao.cam.ac.uk/surveys/snrs

RESOURCES

This View of Gould

As an essayist, Stephen Jay Gould (1941–2002, below) elegantly elucidated the intricacies of evolutionary theory while citing everyone from Darwin to Joe DiMaggio. As a scientist, he was one of the originators of the punctuated equilibria hypothesis, which states that evolution runs in fits and starts, not smoothly. To sample Gould's oeuvre and bone up on evolutionary thinking, click over to the Unofficial Stephen Jay Gould Archive, hosted by undergraduate Miguel Chavez of Yuba College in California. The site's library brims with writings by Gould and others that tackle some of his favorite subjects, including the levels at which natural selection acts, creationism, and the controversy over intelligence testing and heredity. The multimedia section houses audio interviews with Gould and numerous other evolutionary bigwigs. You'll also find reviews of Gould's works and links to full-text versions of some of his books. >>

www.stephenjaygould.org



WEB PROJECTS

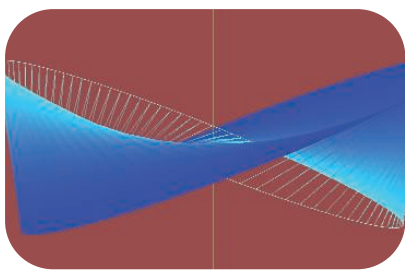
A Scholarly Wikipedia?

A Wikipedia co-founder-turned-detractor is hoping to build a more academic alternative to the freewheeling, user-written encyclopedia. Headed by Larry Sanger, the Citizendium will rely on public participation but will recruit experts to edit entries. Although these editors won't dictate the content of the articles, they will guide authors and referee disputes among them. They can also stamp articles they've vetted as approved. Answering a frequent criticism of Wikipedia, anyone who wants to edit an entry on a scholarly topic will usually need academic credentials. A pilot project to test the strategy began last week. The results won't be open to the public, but you can apply to be an editor or one of the "constables" who enforces the rules. >> citizendium.org

EDUCATION

Mix-and-Match Chemistry

Instead of synthesizing and testing compounds one at a time, drug designers now often create lineups of slightly varying molecules for faster evaluation, a method called combinatorial chemistry. To unlock the secrets of this approach to drug discovery, browse this primer from Oleg Larin of the Moscow State Academy of Fine Chemical Technology in Russia. The site's six brief chapters explore how researchers perform combinatorial chemistry in the solid phase and in solution. Readers can delve into the different resins for cradling molecules and compare various tags for tracking synthesis products. The site also features a glossary and a collection of combinatorial chemistry articles. >> www.combichemistry.com



EDUCATION

<< Bent Into Shape

The National Curve Bank, hosted by two mathematicians and a computer scientist at California State University, Los Angeles, is a hall of fame for

geometrical figures. The more than 60 pages—many contributed by site visitors—explore curves that have vexed and intrigued mathematicians, such as the conchoid of Nicomedes, a shell-like shape developed in the 3rd century B.C.E., and the familiar Möbius strip (above). This twisted loop defies expectations because it has only one surface instead of a top and bottom. The features also offer historical background about the discoverer and include animations or Java applets. >>

curvebank.calstatela.edu/home/home.htm

Send site suggestions to >> netwatch@aaas.org

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