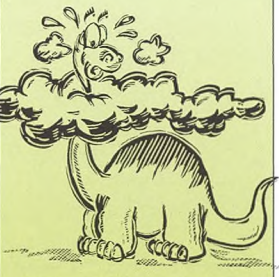
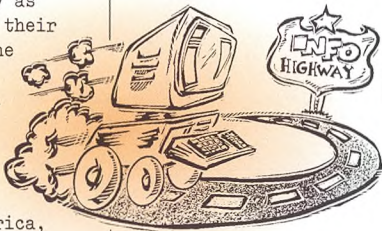
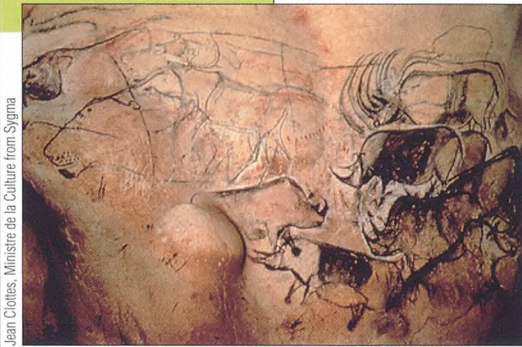


Astronomers wait at every major telescope in the world to see the historic cosmic crack-up of the 21 big fragments of Comet Shoemaker-Levy 9 as it smacks into the atmosphere of Jupiter at 134,000 miles an hour. Plumes of fire shoot up hundreds of miles, high enough to become visible to telescopes on Earth.

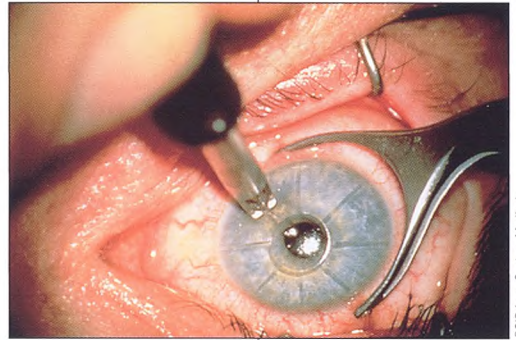
Internet activity rises sharply as surfers find their way around the information superhighway. Advertisers, rock music reviewers, the worldly Voice of America, and others decide it's time to jump on.



NASA publishes a new report supporting the theory that a giant comet hit Earth 65 million years ago and vaporized 100 billion tons of sulphur to create the cloud barrier that froze Earth's atmosphere and killed the dinosaurs.

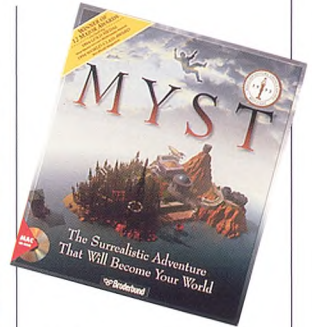


Acave is found in southern France, full of 300 vivid paintings of woolly-haired rhinos, bears, mammoths, panthers, and owls made about 20,000 years ago. The Stone Age artists also left behind bear skulls, flint knives, footprints, and fireplaces. Experts call it the archaeological find of the century.



BSIP from Custom Medical

A long-term study of radial keratotomy finds it generally safe and effective. For the nearsighted, tiny spokelike incisions into the eye improve focusing ability and eliminate the need for eyeglasses. The patient is awake for the procedure.



The non-violent CD-ROM game *Myst* by Cyan, Inc. becomes a best-selling phenomenon, winning legions of devoted fans and spawning imitators. The fantasy-adventure's graphic visuals are hyper-real; the written word is the key to the mystery.



One of Lake Superior's enduring mysteries is solved by scientists and marine historians who explore the wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald, an ore carrier that sank with its crew in a 1975 storm. The ship, overused and in poor condition, was ripped apart by 90-mph winds and 30-foot waves. Most of the 29 crewmen are entombed inside the wreckage, well preserved in the 39° waters.



Gerard Laz, Animals/Animals

Cutbacks in military spending force the U.S. Navy to reduce its elite 100-dolphin fleet trained for use in sonar research, mine sweeping, and underwater recovery. Too tame to be released in the open sea, the veterans of conflicts from Vietnam to the Persian Gulf retire to aquariums and water parks.

The most popular names for newborns this year are Ashley and Michael.

Young people serve their country by volunteering under a new program called AmeriCorps, where 20,000 people aged 17 and up work with community-based organizations in exchange for \$7,500 plus money toward college tuition or loans.

One percent of the nation's 50 million school-age children learn at home as families seek alternatives to public schools. In a handful of high-tech experiments, kids submit homework by modem, download books and artwork from the Internet, and collaborate on academic projects with other children around the world.

A survey of college kids reveals their favorite sources of sugar and caffeine during all-night studying to be: powdered iced tea, peanut butter mixed with marshmallow cream, baby food, ramen noodles, raw cookie dough, and trail mix made from chocolate chips, graham cracker bits, and mini-marshmallows.



© James D. Wilson/Gamma/Liaison

A lively new cafe society centers around the 5,000 gourmet coffeeshops which spring up around the country. To the often young and trendy patrons, the social interaction is just as important as the espresso. Some cafes offer full-time Internet links so patrons can sip and chat with other Internet latte-drinkers.



Yoga, a Hindu system of stretching exercises for well-being, surges in popularity, mostly because the older generation seeks a technique for alleviating stress and finds yoga better than aerobics.

Celia Gamma/Liaison



Aerobic boxing, with boxing-style leg and arm work, turns out to be one of the year's hot exercise trends, showing up in workout studios and attracting those who want to work off their aggression by throwing a right and a few jabs.



Besides recycled clothing like license-plate bustiers, bottle-cap jewelry, trash-bag and duct-tape dresses, fashion trends include the schoolgirl look with thigh-highs, and the grunge-turned-beatnik look of long, straight hair and a goatee.

A new survey shows that over 12 million Americans are vegetarians, choosing the no-meat lifestyle because of concern about animal cruelty, cost-efficiency, eco-friendliness and/or improved health and fitness.



The hottest merchandise around is Mighty Morphin Power Rangers, so hot Cabbage Patch dolls pale in comparison. Parents criticize Fox's super-violent TV show, but their kids crave Dragon Daggers, Megazords, and the 4-foot, \$230 battery powered car. "Go, go, Power Rangers!"