Ode to E Pluribus Unum for Sunday June 26 2022

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NGC 6188: Dragons of Ara

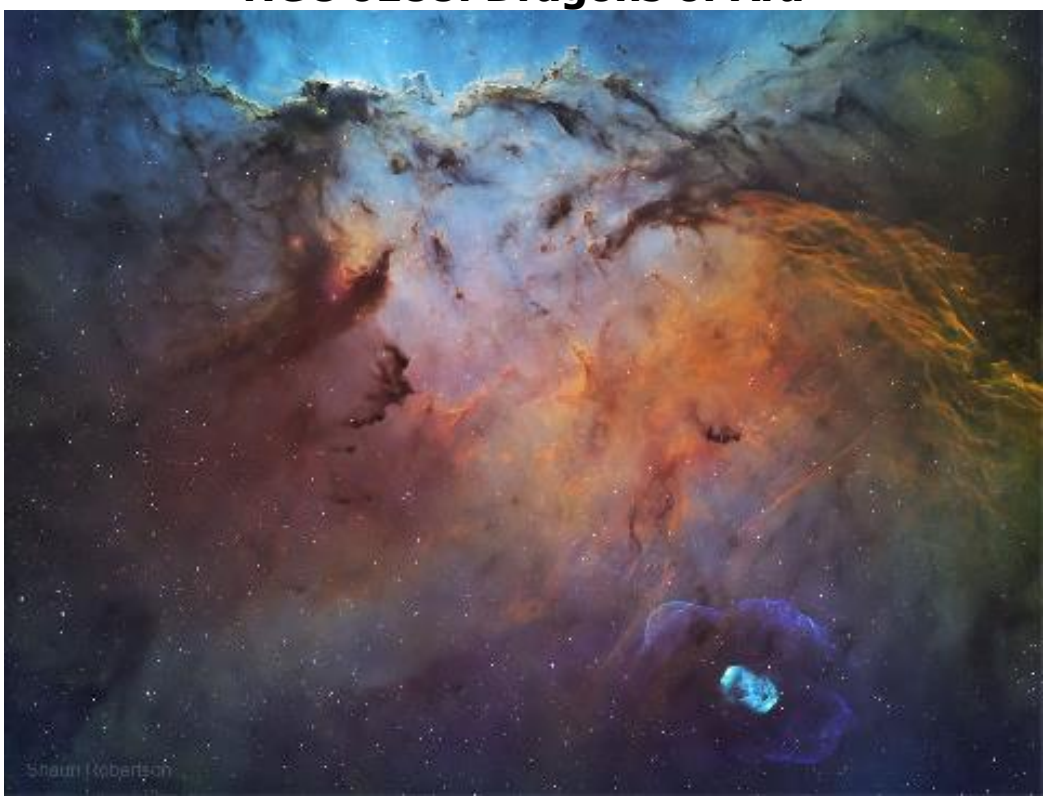

Image Credit & Copyright: Shaun Robertson

Do dragons fight on the altar of the sky? Although it might appear that way, these dragons are illusions made of thin gas and dust.

The emission nebula NGC 6188, home to the glowing clouds, is found about 4,000 light years away near the edge of a large molecular cloud unseen at visible wavelengths, in the southern constellation Ara (the Altar).

Massive, young stars of the embedded Ara OB1 association were formed in that region only a few million years ago, sculpting the dark shapes and powering the nebular glow with stellar winds and intense ultraviolet radiation. The recent star formation itself was likely triggered by winds and supernova explosions, from previous generations of massive stars, that swept up and compressed the molecular gas.

Joining NGC 6188 on this cosmic canvas, visible toward the lower right, is rare emission nebula NGC 6164, also created by one of the region's massive O-type stars. Similar in

appearance to many planetary nebulae, NGC 6164's striking, symmetric gaseous shroud and faint halo surround its bright central star near the bottom edge.

This impressively wide field of view spans over 2 degrees (four full Moons), corresponding to over 150 light years at the estimated distance of NGC 6188.

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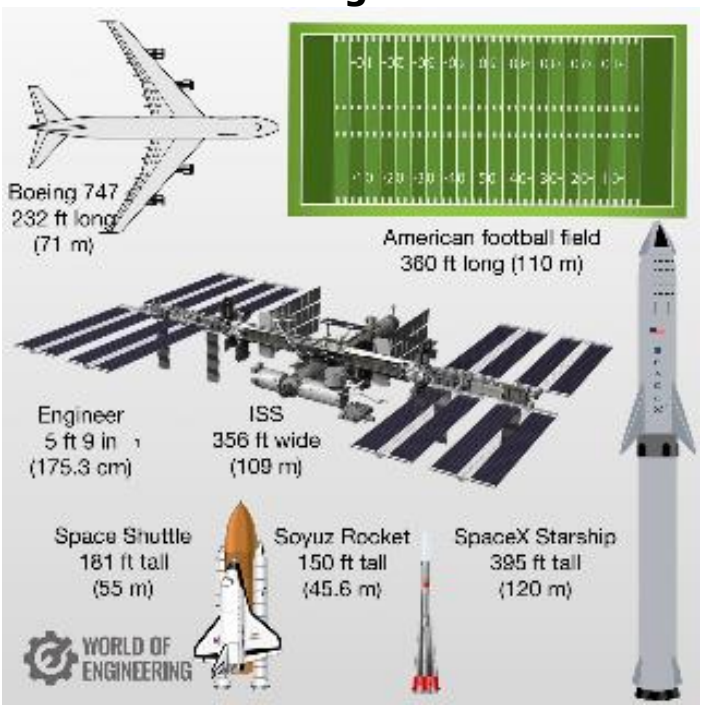
Just How Large is the ISS?



Pretty darn impressive for something shipped from earth to orbit.

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"Buttercup recognized your car coming and ran off."

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Grilled Marinated Swordfish and Accompanying Libations

This was supplied by Bill Warner but he claims he doesn't know where it came from.

Ingredients

4 cloves garlic, minced
1/3 cup white wine
¼ cup lemon juice
2 tablespoons soy sauce
2 tablespoons olive oil
1 tablespoon poultry seasoning (*adobo seasoning or Morton & Basset Mexican blend work well*)

¼ teaspoon salt
1/8 teaspoon pepper
4 swordfish steaks
1 tablespoon chopped fresh parsley (optional)
4 slices lemon (optional)

Directions

1. Combine the garlic, white wine, soy sauce, lemon juice, poultry seasoning, salt and pepper. Mix just to blend. Place swordfish steaks into marinade and refrigerate for 1 hour.
2. Build a hot fire in a charcoal grill, or preheat a gas grill to high heat. Lightly oil the grate.
3. Grill the swordfish steaks on high heat, 5 to 6 minutes per side.
4. Garnish with parsley and lemon wedges, if desired.

This goes well served over rice, too.

Sun Tea

For summertime, use Bigelow Perfectly Mint tea and nothing else. Three bags per quart of cold water, and let stand in the sun in a glass container for at least three hours, depending on weather conditions (an entire afternoon usually works well). Serve with lots and lots of ice.

Rosemary-Tangerine Cooler

2 Tbsp raw sugar plus more
4 Tangerines, halved crosswise
16 Rosemary sprigs
2 cups white rum

Heat a cast-iron skillet over high heat. Pour some raw sugar onto a plate and set the cut sides of the tangerines down in it. Place 8 rosemary sprigs in the skillet and put the tangerines on top of them, sugary cut sides down. Cook until sugar caramelizes, anywhere from two to five minutes. Let cool.

Quarter tangerines; discard rosemary. Place the tangerine quarters in a pitcher along with 2 tablespoons of sugar. Muddle to release juices. Add rum and about six cups of ice. Stir until pitcher is frosty. Divide among glasses and garnish with remaining rosemary sprigs.

We use a wooden muddler and a big glass pitcher. I have dumped some of the sautéed rosemary into the pitcher and muddled it along with the fruit – but not too much, or else everybody's going to end up picking rosemary leaves out of their teeth.

Stir well before each pour. I have used a strainer, too. That might come in handy for any guests that don't like the pulp.

And this is a powerful drink, too, so nurse it along slowly and let the ice melt down.

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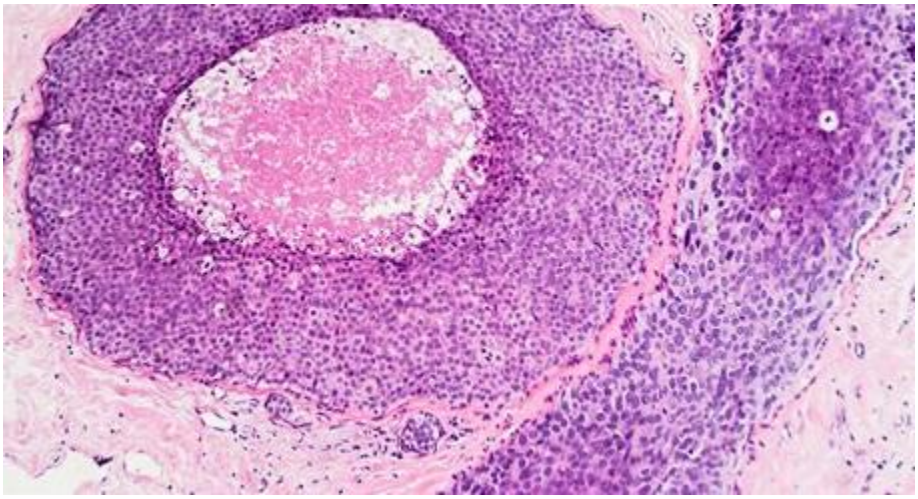
To Test Cancer Drugs, These Scientists Grew 'Avatars' of Tumors

Growing organoids in dishes and xenografts in mice lets scientists recreate a living person's tumor—and test dozens of drugs against them at the same time.



breast cancer tissue

In a historic first, the team returned results in time to recommend a treatment that was used to attack a living patient's breast cancer.PHOTOGRAPH: GETTY IMAGES

IN 2018, ALANA Welm found herself in an exciting, yet burdensome, position. The University of Utah breast cancer research lab where she leads joint projects with her husband, Bryan Welm, had created lab-grown versions of real tumors isolated from living cancer patients. Each cancer had been translated into two kinds of biological models: xenografts, made by implanting tissue into mice, and organoids, miniature clumps of tissue grown in plastic dishes.

Each simulated cancer was a way to test which of about 45 drugs, some experimental and others approved by the US Food and Drug Administration, might perform best for the real patient. During testing on one patient's organoids, the researchers isolated a drug that effectively killed its cancer cells. That was the exciting bit. The burden: Welm had no right to do anything about it. She couldn't tell the patient or her doctor. "We were just doing this for research," says Welm.

This particular drug had already earned FDA approval to be used against breast cancer, but it wasn't approved for this patient's type of cancer. So Welm dialed up her university's Institutional Review Board, an ethics oversight group."We called them and said: We found this, we really think we need to let them know," Welm recalls. The board agreed; the team could bring the patient's physician into the loop. "That really was an eye-opener," Welm says. "Wow, we can actually make a difference!"

Yet by the time Welm reached the physician, it was too late. The patient passed away shortly after. "It was heartbreaking," she says. But it was also motivating: The Welms' team doubled down on efforts to refine their methods and turn their research into a clinical tool.

Last month, writing in Nature Cancer, the team reported the next step. After creating a "bank" of xenografts and organoids from real patient tumors, they validated, for the first time, that these accurately capture how such diverse and dangerous cancers respond to drugs in humans. And in another first, the team returned results in time to recommend a treatment that was used to attack a living patient's breast cancer.

This is a big deal, particularly for the people battling the kinds of cancer this lab studies—the most lethal forms, which tend to recur and metastasize. "Having cancer in the breast doesn't kill anyone," Welm says. "It's because it spreads to the brain and the lungs and the liver and the bones." Although these cancers remain incurable, there are drugs that can fight them, for example by stopping cancer cells from replicating, thereby slowing tumor growth. But it's impractical—and toxic—to blow through all of them. (Stacking treatments can also breed drug resistance.)

One option is to sequence the genome of the cancer tissue to find which gene mutations are causing the problem. But that doesn't guarantee that there's a drug that targets cells with that mutation. A 2017 study reported that tumor genetics revealed a recommended treatment in fewer than 10 percent of 769 patients. In a 2018 clinical trial for people with metastatic breast cancer, 46 percent of participants had tumors with mutations that are targeted by a drug—but none saw any benefit from being matched with drugs on that basis.

The Welms' approach, called functional precision medicine, posits that you can find answers by growing organoids and xenografts as tools for trial-and-error drug testing. Both are like "avatars," says Elgene Lim, a medical oncologist with the Garvan Institute of Medical Research in Sydney, Australia. "Having the confidence that your avatar is truly an accurate avatar could potentially cut down the billions of dollars spent on drug development barking up the wrong tree only because your model is wrong."

The Welms' team isn't the only group betting on this idea. The London startup Vivan Therapeutics is trying a similar idea by screening drugs on genetically modified fruit flies. Companies like SEngine, Certis, and Champions Oncology have offered organoids or xenografts for cancer. And other labs have created collections of breast cancer tissue, and monitored drug response over the span of a week. The Welms' team wanted to zero in on the most lethal versions of the disease—and to study the avatars for months.

They also took the dual approach of using xenografts and organoids because they provide different glimpses into what's happening in the body. Organoid tests can—quickly and in parallel—find out which drugs disarm the cancer. The mouse tests can predict metastasis and whether a drug slows recurrence. Xenografts offer more comprehensive information, but organoids are easier to scale, faster, and more humane.

Since 2007, the Welms have partnered with hospital physicians at the Huntsman Cancer Institute and have built a bank of cells, taken from 40 patients. Then they grew organoids and created xenografts. They stowed the prepared tissue away in a lab freezer set to minus-320 degrees Fahrenheit. (They also stowed the biological details of each online for any researcher to study.)

Next, to prove that their models actually represented a patient's cancer, they compared the organoids and the xenografts to each other and to the real tumor: Were the same genes active? Did they grow as quickly? Did they respond the same way to drugs? Yes, yes, and yes. The team felt confident that they had built high-fidelity avatars. "Now," asks Welm, "can we actually use it to help?"

Their frozen bank contained tissue from a 43-year-old who had been diagnosed in 2018 and started a course of surgery, chemo, and radiation. But her cancer came back a year later, and in her liver, too. A genomic test of the cancer came up empty: There weren't any drugs built to fight tumors with these genetic mutations. So, in 2019, the team began testing different FDA-approved compounds against organoids and xenografts grown from the woman's tissue. One called eribulin stood out. It killed the cancerous organoids. The mice went into remission and survived long enough to be put down for old age.

Welm brought the team's result to the patient's physician, who started her on eribulin. After the 2018 attempt to advise treatment didn't pan out, Welm was nervous. "I just remember the physician coming by. And they showed us the scans" of areas where the cancer had previously spread, she says. "Before, there were all these liver [metastases], and her abdomen was filled with fluid. And then—there's nothing. I remember looking at the scans with my mouth open, like: Really?"

Conversation Boost Works, but It Makes Things Awkward

The patient went into complete remission for nearly five months. But about eight months after she started eribulin treatment, the cancer returned and she passed away.

This is often true for the extremely aggressive cancers Welm studies. But she is encouraged by two key oncological metrics from this patient's treatment: "progression-free survival" (how long a drug keeps cancer from spreading) and "time to next systemic therapy" (how long until another drug is needed). Both numbers usually go down with each subsequent round of treatment. In this case, they went up. The patient's previous chemotherapy had stopped the cancer from growing for 41 days. The eribulin gave the patient 138 days before the cancer returned, and 197 days before she needed a new kind of treatment.

It's important to note that this is a proof-of-concept study, and it represents only one person. Still, says Lim, "it's certainly brought us one step closer to making these avatars more potentially useful to the clinical world."

Specifically, it shows that organoids are a reliable alternative to testing on mouse xenografts, which can be slow and expensive. That process can take up to a year, and it doesn't always work. "Patients who have late-stage disease don't have that time," Lim says. Organoids are faster to scale up, since they don't require animals. Welm is shooting to run these tests in about 12 weeks, start to finish. With organoids, says Lim, "the sky's your limit. You can test as many drugs as you want."

Still, there are other caveats. Whenever scientists study cancer outside the human, an immune system is missing. Welm uses immune-compromised mice, and organoids grow without immune challenge. For the time being, that makes these models incompatible with testing immunotherapies, or drugs that rally the natural immune system to combat cancer, Lim and Welm agree.

But that limitation is fading too, says Tony Letai, a professor at Harvard Medical School and the Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Researchers are learning to culture organoids in blood, or in tandem with immune cells. "The writing's on the wall that it ultimately will be possible," says Letai, who is also president of the Society for Functional Precision Medicine. Just 20 years ago, growing real tumors in the lab was a crapshoot—they didn't reliably emulate the patient's. Today, not only are they accurate matches, but scientists can keep cultures alive for months, they have dozens of more potent drugs to screen, and they can analyze the biology of individual cells with mind-boggling accuracy. "This type of approach is, I think, the future of finding cancer patients the right drugs," Letai says.

The University of Utah team has begun enrolling patients in a related clinical trial, in which they will match people to drugs based on the organoid versions of their tumors. The trial includes a survey for physicians as well—Welm hopes to find out whether doctors would actually trust the tool. "It looks very promising, but we don't know till we know," she says.

Welm remembers that even in 2019, when her team was awed by the medical scans showing the patient's improvement after receiving eribulin, they knew the likely outcome. "We have a guarded enthusiasm, just because we know that we need better therapies," she says. "We have a lot of questions that we still need to answer."

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I put my scale in the bathroom corner and that's where the little liar will stay until it apologizes.

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George Michael

George Michael was an English singer, songwriter and record producer. He is considered one of the most significant cultural figures of the MTV generation and is one of the best-selling music artists of all time, with sales of over 120 million records worldwide.

Careless Whisper https://youtu.be/izGwDsrQ1eQ

Carpool Karaoke with James Corden https://youtu.be/hvuENG3O9TM

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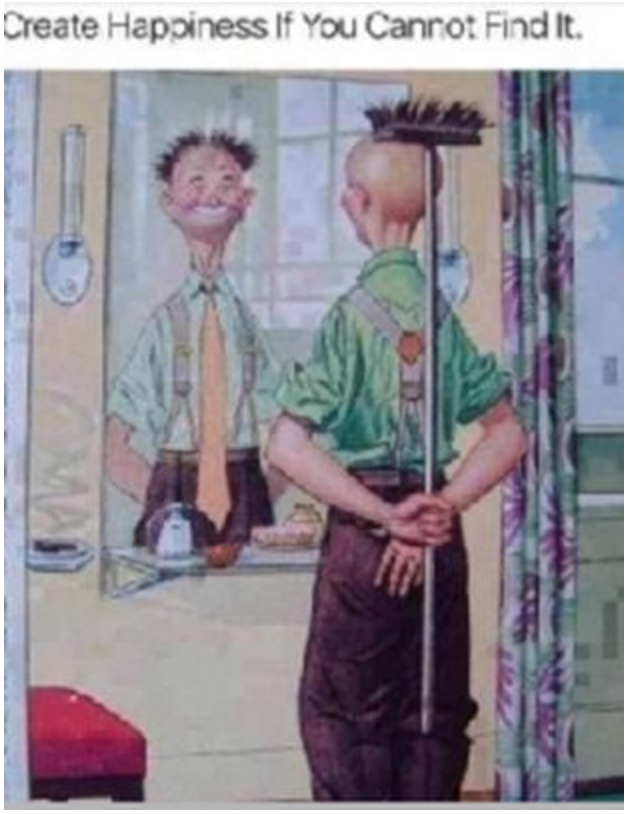

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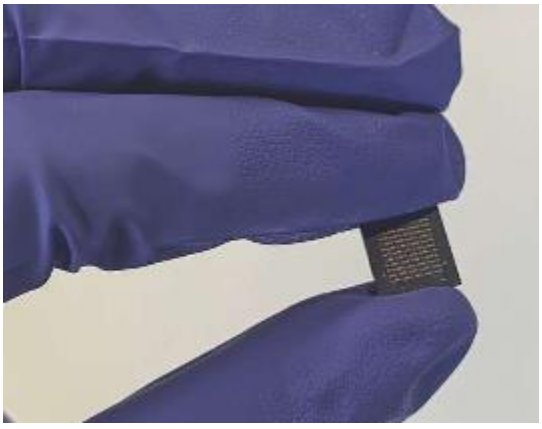
Ultra-fast photonic computing processor using polarization

by University of Oxford



Credit: June Sang Lee, University of Oxford

https://phys.org/news/2022-06-world-ultra-fast-photonic-processor-polarization.html?utm_source=join1440&utm_medium=email

Researchers at the University of Oxford have developed a method using the polarization of light to maximize information storage density and computing performance using nanowires.

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"Don't blame me. I was cleaning his cage and he flew up the pipe."

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Polaris Dawn Crew Training for Private SpaceX Mission this Fall

The Polaris Dawn crew training in the pool to gear up for their mission to Earth orbit aboard a SpaceX Dragon capsule, which is expected to launch in late 2022.
(Image credit: Polaris Program/John Kraus)

The crew for the first mission in the privately funded Polaris program is scaling new heights to prepare for their record-breaking SpaceX flight later this year.

A mission profile, launch schedule estimate and crew update were recently shared on the website for Polaris, a dual effort between SpaceX and billionaire tech entrepreneur Jared Isaacman. Isaacman funded and commanded SpaceX's first all-civilian crewed mission, Inspiration4, which raised over $240 million for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in September 2021. Isaacman announced the Polaris program a few months later.

Polaris aims to continue raising money for St. Jude, as well as stretch the bounds of human spaceflight through three separate crewed launches, all of them funded by Isaacman. In its first mission, Polaris Dawn, Isaacman, the commander, will fly a SpaceX Dragon spacecraft alongside Sarah Gillis, Anna Menon and Scott Poteet. (Both Gillis and Menon work at SpaceX.) Polaris's second launch will also employ a Dragon, but the third aims to be the first crewed mission for SpaceX's next-generation Starship spacecraft.

The Polaris program's unveiling announcement in February of this year said the Polaris Dawn mission would feature the first commercial spacewalk and soar to an orbital altitude higher than any human has reached since the final Apollo mission in 1972 — much higher than any crewed Dragon launches have attained to date. Now, more details have been released about the Polaris Dawn mission and how the crewmembers are training for it.

Polaris Dawn is scheduled to launch no earlier than the fourth quarter of this year. The Dragon capsule carrying Isaacman and his three crewmates will lift off atop a SpaceX Falcon 9 rocket from NASA's Kennedy Space Center in Florida.

Pushing the rocket to the edge of its capabilities, the Falcon 9 will fly the spacecraft to an initial elliptical orbit of 745 miles by 118 miles (1,200 by 190 kilometers). The Dragon will then raise its apogee (highest point above Earth) to 870 miles (1,400 km) using its Draco thrusters. The spacecraft will remain in that elliptical orbit for a spell, then lower its apogee to 435 miles (700 km). For context, the International Space Station orbits at an average altitude of about 250 miles (400 km).

The Polaris Dawn crew. Anna Menon, Scott "Kidd" Poteet, Jared Isaacman and Sarah

Gillis.

(Image credit: Polaris Program/John Kraus)

Because Polaris Dawn will feature the first spacewalk, or extravehicular activity (EVA), of a private astronaut, SpaceX has had to develop its own commercial EVA suites. A Dragon EVA requires the spacecraft's main cabin be depressurized the same way that NASA's Gemini capsules were during the early days of human spaceflight. That means everyone onboard will be wearing suits designed for exposure to the vacuum of space.

The recent Polaris program update(opens in new tab), which was posted on June 9, states that teams "on multiple fronts" have been working to design and test SpaceX's new EVA suits, while the specific research and experiments to be included on the Polaris Dawn mission are being continually reviewed and selected.

The first commercial spacewalk is planned for the first mission of billionaire Jared Isaacman's newly-announced "Polaris Program," dubbed "Polaris Dawn," to be launched with a crew of four as soon as November or December 2022.

Polaris Dawn aims to be the first commercial mission ever to perform a spacewalk. (Image credit: Polaris Program)

Over the past three months, teams at SpaceX and Polaris have also been helping the crewmembers prepare for the mission. For example, the group underwent indoor scuba training in California to practice the types of nonverbal communication and crewmate support techniques required during EVAs. Once comfortable in the pool, the crew were able to complete dives offshore from California's Catalina Island to experience various physiological responses associated with pressure change.

Recently, the team completed extensive high-altitude hikes in Ecuador, including a climb up the country's second-tallest peak, Cotopaxi. Cotopaxi stands 19,347 ft (5,897 meters) tall, and reaching its peak required the Polaris Dawn crew to cross glaciers and acclimate to drastic shifts in elevation. The June 9 update states that the crew will undergo simulations with the Dragon spacecraft in the coming months and will also take part in some vomit-comet style centrifuge exercises, as well as work on recognizing and dealing with signs of hypoxia.

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If you find yourself feeling useless, remember it took 20 years, trillions of dollars, and four U.S. presidents to replace the Taliban with the Taliban.

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Single Beaver Caused Mass Internet, Cell Service Outages in Northern B.C.

(Shutterstock)(Shutterstock)

Kaitlyn Bailey

PRINCE RUPERT, B.C. - Officials have now identified a beaver as the cause of a June 7 outage which left many residents of northwestern B.C. without internet, landline and cellular service for more than eight hours.

The beaver gnawed its way through an aspen tree which then fell on both BC Hydro lines and a Telus fibre-optic cable line strung along BC Hydro poles between Topley and Houston.

The resulting power outage affected just 21 customers but the fibre optics damage affected Telus customers in Burns Lake, Granisle, Haida Gwaii, the Hazeltons, Kitimat, Prince George, Prince Rupert, Smithers, Terrace, Thornhill, Houston, Topley, Telkwa, Fraser Lake and Vanderhoof.

CityWest, the utilities company owned by the City of Prince Rupert, also had its customers affected because it uses the Telus fibre optics line.

BC Hydro official Bob Gammer said crews identified a beaver as the culprit because of chew marks at the bottom of the downed tree.

The lines are located in a swampy area and with the high water levels, there was some difficulty accessing the site, he added.

"It's unusual, but it does happen every once in a while," Gammer said. "So I wouldn't be a rich man if I had a nickel for every beaver outage, but they do happen."

He said it is not uncommon for utilities to share pole space.

The felled tree did result in a fire which was responded to by members of the Topley Volunteer Fire Department.

While some enjoyed the unconnected afternoon, the service outage created stress for others because many businesses could only accept cash.

"It was a real nuisance. Nobody usually carries cash anymore," said Brett Johnson, auto technician at the Petro-Canada gas station located at the intersection of Highways 16 and 37 near Kitwanga.

"People turning north onto Highway 37 typically fill up at this gas station because the next one is two hours away," he said.

During the outage there were some who didn't have cash and had to just "take a chance," Johnson added.

Prince Rupert Mayor Lee Brain said cell service was affected because some of the cell towers use fibre connections allowing higher bandwidth.

And he said northwestern communities are vulnerable because there is just one fibre optics cable between Prince George and Prince Rupert.

But that will change because CityWest is laying a second fibre optics line, this one down the coast to connect to Vancouver.

"So if a tree goes down again, we will all still have internet through the line coming in from the ocean," said Brain.

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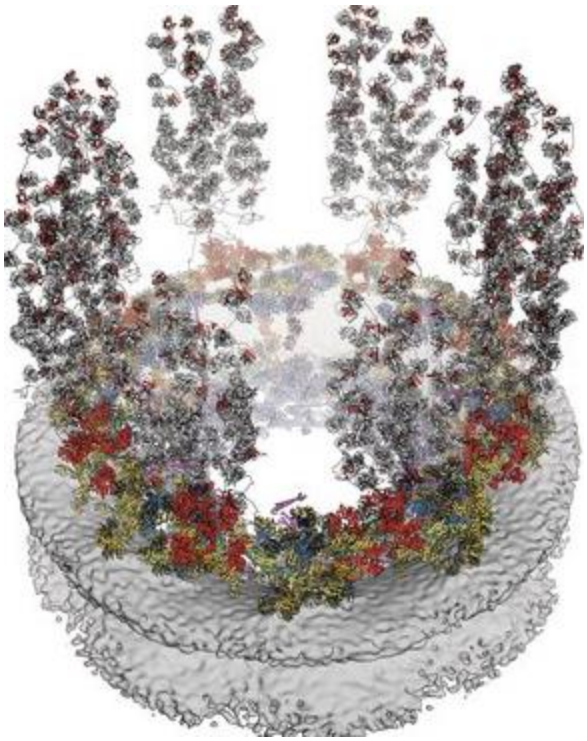
Decoding a Key Part of the Cell, Atom by Atom



A molecular model of the outside (cytoplasmic) face of the nuclear pore complex. Reprinted with permission from C.J. Bley et al., Science 376, eabm9129 (2022).
Credit: Hoelz laboratory/Caltech

Whatever you are doing, there is an entire suite of molecular machinery inside each of your cells hard at work.

https://www.caltech.edu/about/news/decoding-a-key-part-of-the-cell-atom-by-atom

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As I watch this generation try to rewrite our history, one thing I'm sure of .. it will be misspelled and have no punctuation.

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Want to Travel on a Double Decker Airplane Seat?

https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/chaise-longue-double-decker-airplane-seat/?utm_source=join1440&utm_medium=email&utm_placement=newsletter

Umm…maybe not so good for bio-breaks.

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The Queen Business is not that Shabby

https://youtu.be/3Ddsbh9SJ3M

A castle here, some rental property there…pretty soon it's real money

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Optimized Processes for Transforming Sulfur in Wastewater to Valuable Materials

Promising technologies for converting wastewater into drinkable water produce a chemical compound that can be toxic, corrosive and malodorous. An analysis of one possible solution reveals ways to optimize it for maximum energy efficiency, pollutant removal and resource recovery.

By Rob Jordan: Stanford Woods Institute for the Environment

One person's wastewater is another person's treasure. A new Stanford University study paves the way to mining sewage for valuable materials used in fertilizers and batteries that could someday power smartphones and airplanes. The analysis, published recently in ACS ES&T Engineering, reveals how to optimize electrical processes for transforming sulfur pollution, and could help lead to affordable, renewable energy-powered wastewater treatment that creates drinkable water.

https://youtu.be/pFEOR9E01iA

Treating wastewater is key for both reducing environmental pollution and supplying communities with safe drinking water. However, current processes for treating wastewater efficiently produce sulfides, a group of harmful chemicals that are dangerous to people and ecosystems.
Video by Lindsay Filgas & Rob Jordan

"We are always looking for ways to close the loop on chemical manufacturing processes," said study senior author Will Tarpeh, an assistant professor of chemical engineering at Stanford. "Sulfur is a key elemental cycle with room for improvements in efficiently converting sulfur pollutants into products like fertilizer and battery components."

A better solution

As fresh water supplies dwindle, particularly in arid regions, focus has intensified on developing technologies that convert wastewater to drinkable water. Membrane processes that use anaerobic or oxygen-free environments to filter wastewater are particularly promising because they require relatively little energy. However, these processes produce sulfide, a compound that can be toxic, corrosive and malodorous. Strategies for dealing with that problem, such as chemical oxidation or the use of certain chemicals to convert the sulfur into separable solids, can generate byproducts and drive chemical reactions that corrode pipes and make it harder to disinfect the water.

A tantalizing solution for dealing with anaerobic filtration's sulfide output lies in converting the sulfide to chemicals used in fertilizer and cathode material for lithium-sulfur batteries, but the mechanisms for doing so are still not well understood. So, Tarpeh and his colleagues set out to elucidate a cost-effective approach that would create no chemical byproducts.

The researchers focused on electrochemical sulfur oxidation, which requires low energy input and enables fine-tuned control of final sulfur products. (Whereas some products, such as elemental sulfur, can deposit on electrodes and slow down chemical reactions, others, like sulfate, can be easily captured and reused.) If it worked effectively, the process could be powered by renewable energy and adapted to treat wastewater collected from individual buildings or entire cities.

Making novel use of scanning electrochemical microscopy – a technique that facilitates microscopic snapshots of electrode surfaces while reactors are operating – the researchers quantified the rates of each step of electrochemical sulfur oxidation along with the types and amounts of products formed. They identified the main chemical barriers to sulfur recovery, including electrode fouling and which intermediates are hardest to convert. They found, among other things, that varying operating parameters, such as the reactor voltage, could facilitate low-energy sulfur recovery from wastewater.

These and other insights clarified trade-offs between energy efficiency, sulfide removal, sulfate production and time. With them, the researchers outlined a framework to inform the design of future electrochemical sulfide oxidation processes that balance energy input, pollutant removal and resource recovery. Looking toward the future, the sulfur recovery technology could also be combined with other techniques, such as recovery of nitrogen from wastewater to produce ammonium sulfate fertilizer. The Codiga Resource Recovery Center, a pilot-scale treatment plant on Stanford's campus, will likely play a large role in accelerating future design and implementation of these approaches.

"Hopefully, this study will help accelerate adoption of technology that mitigates pollution, recovers valuable resources and creates potable water all at the same time," said study lead author Xiaohan Shao, a PhD student in civil and environmental engineering at Stanford.

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Vivaldi and Others Meet the Marimba

Four Seasons https://youtu.be/0YO82ZRHhEw

Lion Sleeps Tonight https://youtu.be/MB2b_g9DJnE

Goode Hoop https://youtu.be/5KrGARNpqj4?t=1

Christmas Concert https://youtu.be/7-q-pGOUEGU?t=42

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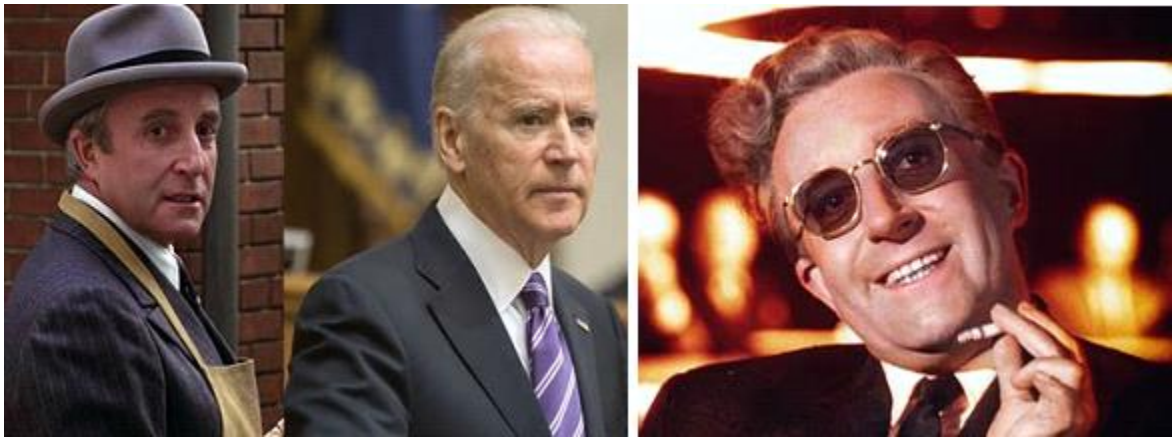
Peter Sellers on Being There and Strangelove…Shows I Like to Watch



Being there https://youtu.be/u702of7h1bI

These are so special to me that I wait ten years between viewings. While Strangelove is truly wonderful, Being There is in my humble opinion the funniest movie ever produced…period.

https://youtu.be/7S6uGe7p280

This interview shows Sellers in a truly different light.

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Sir Edward Elgar: Nimrod


Nimrod' is the name given to the ninth and best-known variation in Edward Elgar's Enigma Variations, an orchestral work of 14 variations on an original theme composed between 1898 and 1899. Each variation is also a portrait of one of 14 members of Elgar's family and circle of friends. A celebrated work in its own right, 'Nimrod' is a portrait of Augustus J. Jaeger, Elgar's editor and publisher.

https://youtu.be/jAUlEopJxa4?list=RDjAUlEopJxa4&t=4
Sir Edward Elgar/transcribed by MGySgt Donald Patterson "Nimrod" from Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36, Enigma

https://youtu.be/u2E8qcKcgAU
Jonathan Scott on the Weiwuying Organ, National Kaohsiung Center for the Arts

Nimrod is one of a few orchestral pieces that invariably stops me in my tracks, compelling me to turn my full attention to it. Something about it reaches deeply into me. Maybe it can do the same for you.

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My Walking Thoughts

For June 26 2022

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Unintended Consequences

(I do not mean this to be a rant, rather my sincere concern for manner in which the process has been managed)

The thing about my thoughts is they are, well, just that…thoughts; nothing substantial, not rooted in undeniable fact, no pretense of sound scholarship, or for that matter anything redolent of logic.

Most of my ruminations are flash-in-the-pan; incandescent for an instant then gone leaving nothing more than an ash or two to mark their passage. But to be fair, a few thoughts linger a while, festering, not yet hot enough to emerge into some sort of full-blown something-or-other. It's this half-life state that bothers me more than obvious ills because while I can't put my finger on them, I know there are valid concerns there…just a little beyond my grasp.

We all know there is no action that doesn't have consequences, most of which might be set in the ledger as 'overhead', but then there are those dirty little bits of detritus that pop up to add a uncertainty as to the results of our actions. These we call unintended something-or-others that we are quick to discount.

Bothering me at the moment is the reaction to the ongoing Covid situation, and while there's nothing I can bring to the discussion on the *this's* and *that's* our leaders might have chosen to use to meet the situation, I can't help but worry that their actions may have consequences beyond what any of us could ever have imagined.

What things?

While it's still too early to catalog much less assign significance values to them, there are hints of unforeseen but substantial impacts to our physical and social futures. My real concern lies in the approach those in the seats of power have chosen to unleash…proscriptive at the very least with open debate falling victim to the onslaught.

What proof do I have that my fears are valid? None…

Except that the ease with which a succession of the supposed 'best and brightest' in the highest levels of the nation's controlling interests—not just politicians and administrators, but journalists, educators, clerics--the power elite—have colluded to lead the nation on a fruitless chase with no good end in sight.

Ask those who have served on winless battlefields, people not seeking wealth, acclaim, or glory, but engaged in day-to-day endeavors giving of their time and energy to make life better for us and those who follow, Ask them what they think of the looming rise of a global superstate.

Oh well, until the seemingly outmoded concept of reasoned debate makes a comeback, I'll just keep walking and dreaming up hogwash until I rid myself of the pantheon of fears and doubts that dog my footsteps.

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