

WIRED

Electric Word

Time Capsule

Thirty years ago - on July 20, 1969 - *Apollo 11* touched down on the moon. A triumph of modern technology, it was the first ship to make the 50,000-foot drop from lunar orbit to the moon's surface. The mission's *Columbia* command module now sits surrounded by a sea of tourists at the National Air and Space Museum - so far from the Sea of Tranquility that it's hard to believe the bird marks NASA's proudest moment.

Indeed, today's *Columbia* is less a symbol of the final frontier than of the rusty edge. The craft and other artifacts of the space program are documented in *The New Frontier Revisited*, a photographic project by Ben Sarao on view at NASA (and at www.hq.nasa.gov/office/codec/PandD/greathall/BSarao/home1.htm). Sarao's lens makes clear that we've taken many small steps for man, but one giant leap backward for lunar exploration.

- Jessie Scanlon

Yahoo 2?

Andrew Beebe spent this spring not talking about his Silicon Valley startup. Whispering about "the next Yahoo!" reached a crescendo at PC Forum, where the 27-year-old entrepreneur (fourth from left) unveiled his grand plan for the so-called Springfield Project - to help small businesses build their own Web sites.

The source of all the speculation will debut this month, and Beebe is more than a little worried. "The buzz snowballed out of control," he says. "My worst nightmare is that the expectations are too high. We better come out of the gates fast, or else." Or else the next Yahoo! may be one of the other companies jumping into the same market, namely Microsoft - or Yahoo!

- Gary Andrew Poole

Water Shed

On the second day, God created the oceans, making it difficult to study the ocean floor. Many, many days later, Interactive Visualization Systems developed Fledermaus, a program that parts the seas by turning complex data sets into undulating datascares. This image of a waterless Atlantic displays North America and other landmasses (in green) and the continental shelf (in light blue), which ends in a sharp drop to the deep ocean floor. It's the ability to study formations like the Mid-Atlantic Ridge (in red) -

the chain of peaks created as continental plates drift - that has made Fledermaus "the standard among seagoing types," according to Oregon State University geologist Dawn Wright.

The software is more than eye candy. "The human brain has trouble interpreting complex data," explains Mike Fellows of Interactive Visualization Systems. "We're designed to interpret three-dimensional visual information, and to do it fast."

- *Jessie Scanlon*

Space Case

Since Henry Urbach Architecture opened in December 1998, the Manhattan gallery has been visited by curators from as far away as the Pompidou Centre and the SFMOMA. An architect by training, Urbach aims to create "a laboratory for investigations into the nature and potential of contemporary space." This effort has produced exhibits of Richard Barnes' haunting photographs of Ted Kaczynski's cabin and the dreamlike renderings of architect Lebbeus Woods. This fall, with a show by the experimental architects of LO/TEK and a planned video installation by director Marco Brambilla, Urbach's "watering hole" for artists and architects will be the place for space.

- *John Aboud*

Star Power

"I've always wanted to do comics," says *Babylon 5* creator J. Michael Straczynski. July marks the first issue of *Rising Stars*, which he describes as an antidote to the dystopian tone of modern comics. "They've gotten kind of cynical and dark," Straczynski complains. "What always appealed to me was their sense of hope."

He finds the seeds of hope in an Illinois town hit by "the flash," an unexplained phenomenon that gives in-utero babies supernatural powers. Yet in the big, bad world, these kids are heroes on a human scale: One, for example, can fly - but only 5 feet off the ground.

"*Rising Stars* tries to redefine the tropes of superpowers," says Straczynski, who is redefining star power in the process.

- *Paula Parisi*

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