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On the Cover

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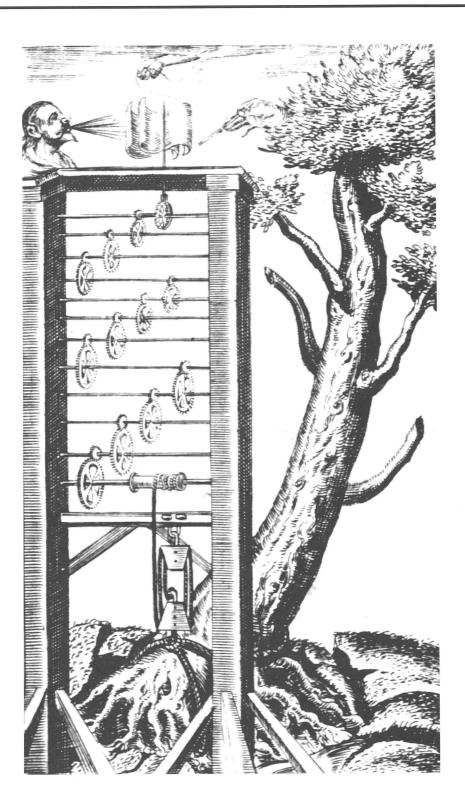
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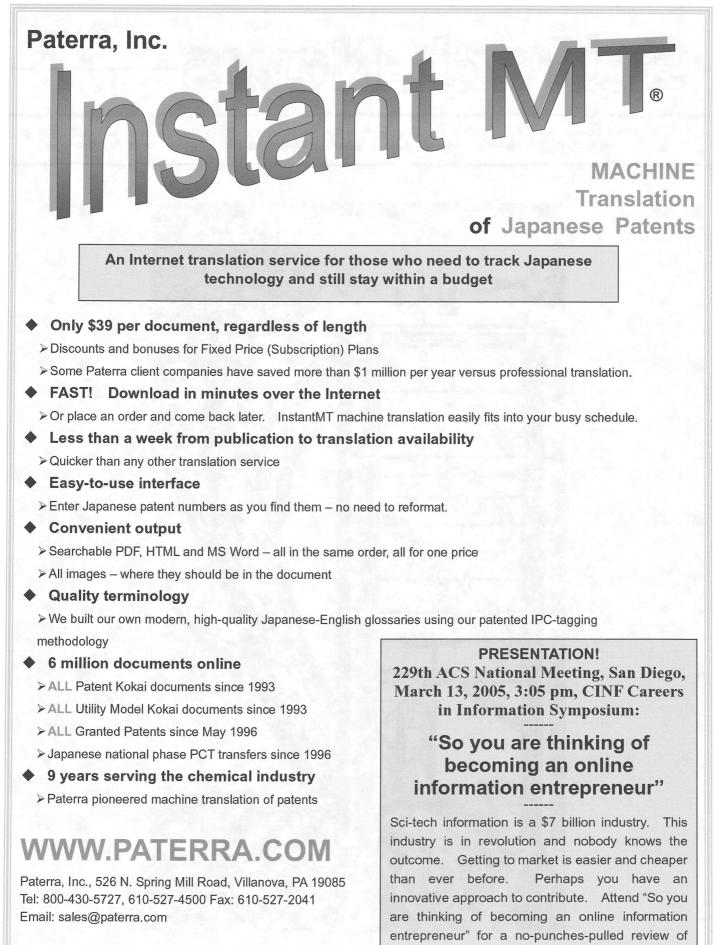
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February 2005

Scitech News

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experiences, tips and strategies.

et al.: On the Cover

Volume 59, Number 1 February 2005 ISSN 0036-8059



Ellis Mount, Editor Emeritus



News from the Sponsoring DivisionsChemistry Division4Engineering Division8Aerospace Section of the14Engineering Division14Materials Research and15Manufacturing Division5Science-Technology Division16

Departments

From the Editor	. 3
Web Reviews	29
New Science and Technology Journals	32
SciTech Book News Reviews	36

Index of Advertisers

ACS	5
STN	inside back cover
McElroy	
Paterra	inside front cover
We Buy Books	6
Wiley	7

Copy Deadline

February IssueJan 5	
May Issue April 5	
August Issue July 5	
November Issue Oct 5	

On the Cover



When Archimedes said, "Give me a place to stand, and I will move the earth," he was intending to illustrate the law of the lever. In the seventeenth century, however, several writers on mechanics wondered whether a gear train might be more feasible for an earth-moving enterprise. John Wilkins, in his Mathematicall Magick (London, 1648), shows us a twelve-gear machine lifting a tree with a mere breath of air as a motive force. But in the text, Wilkins points out that the same twelve gears, with an advantage of 100:1 for each gear, could raise the world, using an initial force of only one-hundredth of a pound. Of course, he did not solve the problem of just where we should put this machine while it lifts the earth from its traces. (Photo and caption courtesy of the Linda Hall Library of Science, Engineering & Technology.)

3



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Editor Emeritus Ellis Mount

Editor Susan M. Fingerman The Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory Laurel, MD Susan.Fingerman@jhuapl.edu Assistant Editor Christina K. Pikas Christina.Pikas@jhuapl.edu Laurel, MD

Business Manager Valerie Perry vperry@uky.edu Lexington, KY

Subscription Manager Susan Fingerman (Acting)

Advertising Manager Susan Fingerman (Acting)

Sci-Tech Book News Reviews Selector: Ellis Mount 471 Emerson Ave. Teaneck, NJ 07666 ellismount@yahoo.com

Department Editors New Science and Technology Journals Web Reviews Editor: Earl Mounts Alcoa Technical Center 100 Technical Drive Alcoa Center PA 15069 (724) 337-2396 earl.mounts@alcoa.com

David Hook MD Robotics Ltd. Brampton, Ontario L6S 4S3 dhook@mdrobotics.ca

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Offices: Sci-Tech News, c/o Editor, Susan Fingerman, Johns Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory, RE Gibson Library and Information Center, 11100 Johns Hopkins Road, Laurel, MD 20723-6099, (443)778-4301, Susan.Fingerman@jhuapl.edu. Business Manager, Valerie Perry, University of Kentucky, N24 Agriculture Sci Ctr North, Lexington, KY 40546-0091, (859)257-2758, email: vperry@uky.edu. Advertising: Susan Fingerman. Subscriptions: Susan Fingerman. Printed by John S. Swift, Teterboro, NJ.