



To Our Readers

WE TEND TO THINK OF THE WORLD'S great discoveries in terms of the people who made them: Thomas Edison and the electric light bulb,

Marie Curie and radium, Einstein and relativity. But, in fact, discoveries are never the work of single individuals toiling alone. They are always the result of a group effort, with each individual building on the achievements of colleagues and predecessors.

This special issue of TIME is the result of a similar collaborative effort. From the cloning of Dolly the sheep to images of exploding galaxies sent back from the Hubble telescope, it's clear that a New Age of Discovery is at hand. We therefore believed the time was right to chronicle some of the emerging discoveries in such fields as evolution, genetics, computing and cosmology. To this end, we asked some of the world's leading scientists, academics and thinkers to pen articles on the state of the art in their disciplines. We also called on our global network of correspondents to chronicle some of the most important discoveries of our time.

Our story on the discoveries still waiting to be made in the world's dwindling rain forests is a case in point. Staff writer Maryann Bird pored over reports from correspondents in Latin America and southeast Asia and met with rain forest scientists and activists to research her piece. Soon the story became somewhat like a rain forest itself. "It grew and grew," she says. "It was tough to chop back, and when I did it seemed to grow back overnight."

While Bird cut a swathe through the rain forest, researcher Lucy Fisher was hip-deep in back issues of TIME, compiling the items in the pages from our archives. She emerged with a new perspective on how life has changed—and how it hasn't. "I enjoyed reading about grand plans which were quietly forgotten, and ones that sounded crazy at the time but are now a reality." Meanwhile, photo editor Sian Best gathered images of discovery from around the world. "I was struck by how important the camera is as an instrument of enlightenment," she says. The pictures Best assembled are used to stunning effect by London-based Why Not Associates, art directors for this issue. Why Not is known for its designs of everything from postage stamps to pop videos—but this is their first international magazine. We feel their fresh vision perfectly captures the adventure of discovery. And it is perhaps this adventure—the "eureka!" moment—that discovery is all about. Recalling his live television coverage of Neil Armstrong's walk on the moon on July 20, 1969, American journalist Walter Cronkite said, "It was as if you could have stood on the dock and waved goodbye to Columbus." As the next millennium approaches, we are all embarking on a new journey of discovery. Bon voyage.

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