

## Ancient Bacteria

250-million-year-old bacteria found in salt

(AP) — In what sounds like something out of Jurassic Park, bacteria that lived before the dinosaurs and survived Earth's biggest mass extinction have been reawakened after a 250-million-year sleep in a salt crystal, scientists say.

The bacteria's age easily beats longevity records set by other organisms revived from apparent suspended animation — not to mention Hollywood's Jurassic Park dinosaurs, cloned from prehistoric DNA encased in amber.

If the discovery by Pennsylvania and Texas researchers holds true, the bacteria could open a window onto a prehistoric world that was both dying and being reborn. It would also show the tenacity of life in the toughest conditions.

Its genetic makeup also could help biologists calibrate the evolutionary clock for the bacterium and its present-day relatives, said Russell Vreeland, a study author and biologist at Pennsylvania's West Chester University.

DNA tests indicate the prehistoric germ is related to present-day Bacillus, a type of bacteria found in soil, water and dust.

"We all feel reasonably comfortable that this particular organism isn't going to attack anything," Vreeland said.

The organism was found in a tiny, fluid-filled bubble inside a salt crystal 1,850 feet underground, about 30 miles east of Carlsbad, N.M.

## Video game vigilance

Addiction, seizures can result from game over exposure

By NONI SRIDHARA  
The Battalion

At the tender age of seven, freshman computer engineering major Dave Baker spent hours on end in front of video games. To this day he still refers to himself as an "addict."

Cases among youth similar to Baker's are what prompted Dr. Steve Dorman, a professor of health and kinesiology at Texas A&M, to investigate the effects of video games on youth.

"Some kids have a pathological preoccupation with video games," he said. "Having kids who play video games, I have been interested in the application of technology to health education for elementary- and middle-school-age children," Dorman said.

The main focus of Dorman's research efforts is to examine the health effects and see whether there are serious drawbacks to the prolonged amount of time children spend in front of the video monitor.

"One of the main drawbacks we found associated with the video games is that kids who possess a photosensitive epilepsy are prone to develop seizures," Dorman said.

He said the rapid images that contain certain types of flashes on the screen, the strobelight-like visual effects and the way the images are projected on the screens, induce the seizures in these children. So far, there have been 50 documented cases.

"This kind of epilepsy is known as 'dark warrior epilepsy' and the only treatments are to either prescribe anticonvulsant drugs or abstaining for a few days from the video games," he said.

When asked why children did not develop such severe reactions to watching cartoons on television, like the recent Pokemon

craze, Dorman said one explanation was that most children do not sit as close to the television as they do their computers.

Another problem with extended time being spent playing video games is Nintendinitis, an injury characterized by severe pain in the tendon between the thumb and pointer from continually clicking and pressing buttons.

Video games may also cause aggression. Dorman compared violent video games to vi-

[the players] have to constantly move around," Dorman said.

"This really helps children develop better understandings of units of space and time, which helps them become high achievers in math and science as they grow up."

Dorman said the one drawback to the knowledge gained from games is that some children who use video games as a learning tool, or what he calls "edutainment media," expect all learning activities to be fun.

Some students are not as inclined to learn at school if the activities are not fun.

As the information technology age progresses and children as young as two years old play on a computer, Dorman said, video games are not going away.

Jon Louis, manager of Hastings Books, Music, and Video in College Station, said Hastings makes \$90,000 per quarter on the sales of video games.

Baker said, because of his major, he spends almost all day in front of the computer.

"I still use playing video games as a form of relaxation," he said. "Besides sporadic migraines, I have not noticed any major side effects."

Dorman said he has not done any studies on the effects of video games on students after middle school, but he said he may study that in the future.

In the meantime, Dorman advises parents and others to be vigilant of the time their children spend playing video games and impose reasonable limits.

"Using these games will provide us with innovative ways to improve health in children and adults who live in an increasingly technologically based world," he said.

**"Some kids have a pathological preoccupation with video games."**

— Dr. Steve Dorman  
professor of health and kinesiology at Texas A&M

olence in television and said that violent video games may arouse children the same way violent cartoons do.

"We need further research in this area, but studies show that children tend to model what they experience in video games," he said.

As some may think, Dorman said abandoning video games altogether is not the solution. He said video games have positive aspects, including enhancing certain skills like spatial visualization, the ability to rotate and twist two- and three-dimensional objects mentally.

"In many of these video games there are objects such as blocks and triangles that they

**Fast Facts:**  
Money per year spent on video games: \$7 billion  
Amount of revenue from video games at College Station Hastings: \$90,000 quarterly

Problems associated with prolonged time in front of video games:

- seizures
- Nintendinitis
- aggression

**Positive aspect:**  
increases spatial perception

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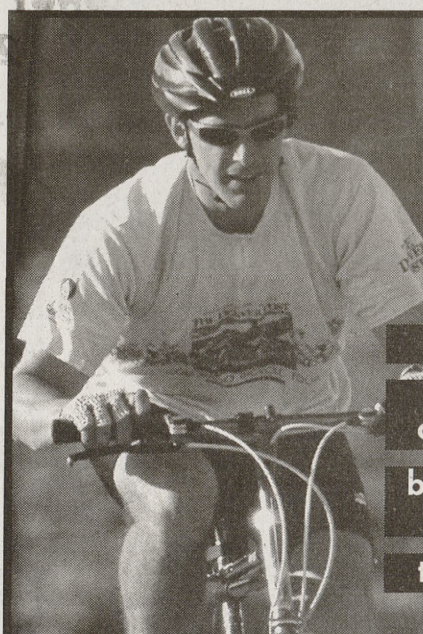
5:30-8:00 p.m.

An expert in the field of etiquette will provide information and helpful hints to use in a formal setting. The meal will consist of seven courses and the cost is \$10.00. Tickets may be purchased beginning October 16th at the Box Office.



Please call 845-1515 with any questions.

~Dress is business casual~



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