SECTION E

TexasLiving

The Dallas Morning News
Monday, June 2, 2003

TELEVISION

ED BARK

Truth, lies and new fall programs

The six major broadcast networks have announced their fall schedules, and as usual each new series is brilliantly conceived and sure to be a big hit.

Actually, that's not true. See if you can separate fact from fiction in the following collection of newcomers. Five are verbatim descriptions from network press releases.

1. *Pick a Peck*: Unlucky in love but filthy rich from three failed marriages, middle-aged Beverly Hills socialite Trisket Gabor looks for a mate among 10 strapped-for-cash country-boy suitors named Peck. They range from randy 80-year-old Isaac ("Gimme some sugar") Peck to triplets Bo, Bob and Bobo Peck. Unknown to our lady in waiting, one of the Pecks is a lifelong bed-wetter and another has hoof-and-mouth disease. But Trisket has her own little secret. She's addicted to pecan logs! Hosted by Chuck Woolery.

2. *The Mullets*: Dwayne and Denny Mullet are brothers and blue-collar, wrestling-loving, lighthearted, optimistic guys who don the hairstyle that bears their surname. Their mother, Mandi Mullet-Heidecker, a warm, maternal type who couldn't be more proud of her offspring no matter what they do, recently married Roger Heidecker, a clean-cut game-show host who is the polar opposite of her boys and her former life. The siblings live life to the fullest while dreaming of bigger and better futures, although their fantasies are out of step with their reality. Loni Anderson plays Mom.

Loni Anderson

3. *Jake 2.0*: Jake Foley is a computer technician who is transformed into a secret agent for the National Security Agency after he is accidentally infected with nanites based on the real-life, beyond-state-of-the-art nanotechnology that reduces the size of a computer to the molecular level. Upon the discovery of his new mind-boggling powers, he begins to operate at an atomic level — possessing superhuman strength, lightning-fast speed, heightened hearing, magnified vision and the telepathic abilities to communicate with computers.

4. *The Fast and the Furriest*: Bow-wow Jones and his motley gang of back-alley mutts are transformed into a clandestine superpowered task force for the Homeland Security Agency after eating discarded pizzas topped with sausage, mushrooms and nanites. Their atomic-level powers include lightning-fast speed, heightened hearing, magnified vision and Frisbee retrieval. State-of-the-art flip card technology adds another layer of realism to this eye-catching blend of animation and live action. Don Johnson is featured as the dogs' gruff government go-between, Maj. John Donson.

Don Johnson

5. *Shut Up or I'll Punch Your Head Off*: Vin Diesel's younger brother, Lex Locomotive, stars as foul-tempered fortune hunter Cliff Cleft in this globe-trotting hour of action, intrigue and bad manners. Cliff is always on the hunt, whether tracking down bejeweled Beanie Babies in Madagascar or commandeering a cache of special-edition bobble-head dolls smuggled into Singapore. His bo-

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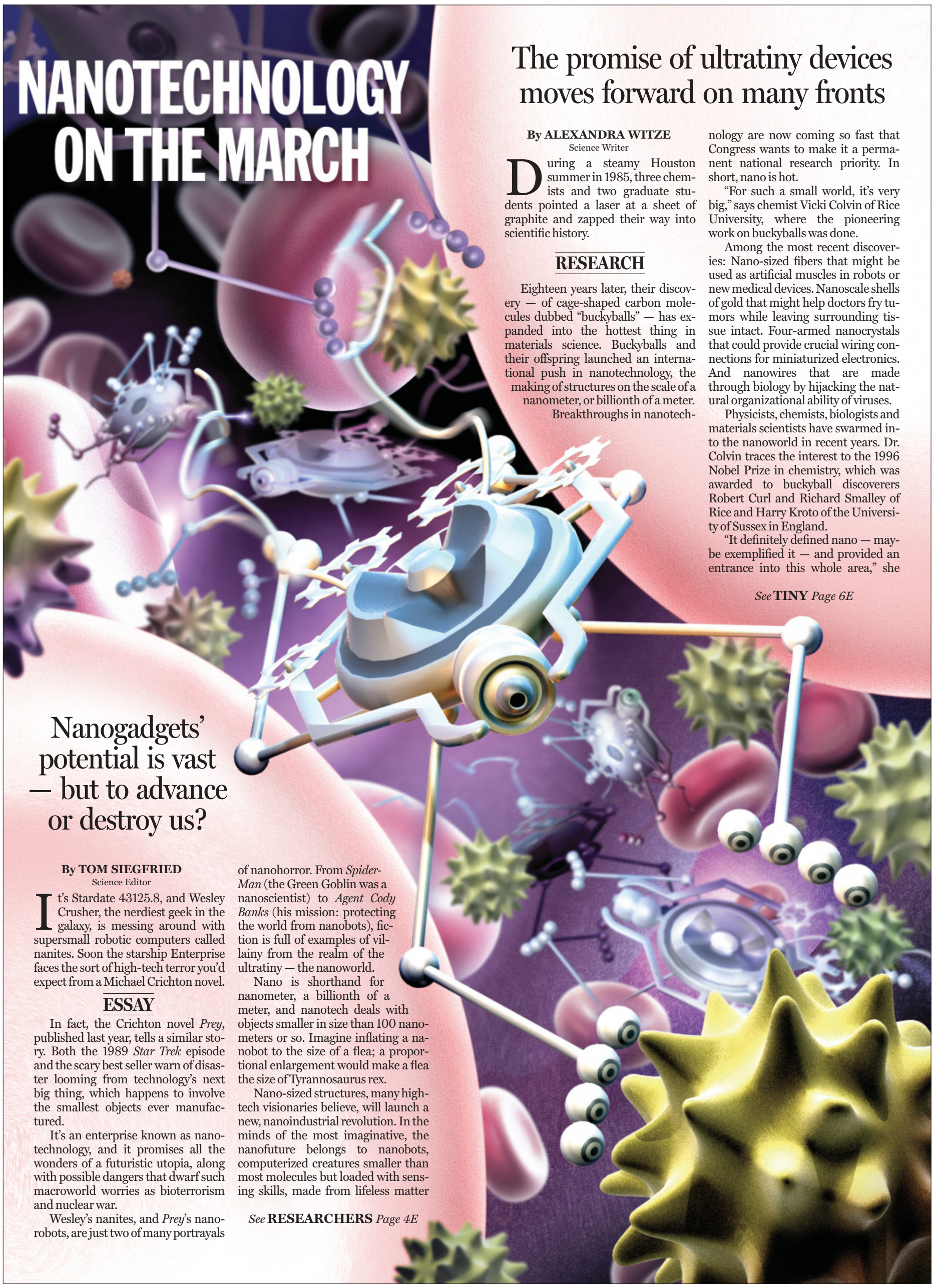
ARTSDAY

Jolly good

Fox's *Keen Eddie* transfers a New York detective to the streets of London. Mark Valley stars. **12E**

Discoveries



The promise of ultratiny devices moves forward on many fronts

By ALEXANDRA WITZE
Science Writer

During a steamy Houston summer in 1985, three chemists and two graduate students pointed a laser at a sheet of graphite and zapped their way into scientific history.

RESEARCH

Eighteen years later, their discovery — of cage-shaped carbon molecules dubbed "buckyballs" — has expanded into the hottest thing in materials science. Buckyballs and their offspring launched an international push in nanotechnology, the making of structures on the scale of a nanometer, or billionth of a meter.

Breakthroughs in nanotechnology are now coming so fast that Congress wants to make it a permanent national research priority. In short, nano is hot.

"For such a small world, it's very big," says chemist Vicki Colvin of Rice University, where the pioneering work on buckyballs was done.

Among the most recent discoveries: Nano-sized fibers that might be used as artificial muscles in robots or new medical devices. Nanoscale shells of gold that might help doctors fry tumors while leaving surrounding tissue intact. Four-armed nanocrystals that could provide crucial wiring connections for miniaturized electronics. And nanowires that are made through biology by hijacking the natural organizational ability of viruses.

Physicists, chemists, biologists and materials scientists have swarmed into the nanoworld in recent years. Dr. Colvin traces the interest to the 1996 Nobel Prize in chemistry, which was awarded to buckyball discoverers Robert Curl and Richard Smalley of Rice and Harry Kroto of the University of Sussex in England.

"It definitely defined nano — maybe exemplified it — and provided an entrance into this whole area," she

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Nanogadgets' potential is vast — but to advance or destroy us?

By TOM SIEGFRIED
Science Editor

It's Stardate 43125.8, and Wesley Crusher, the nerdiest geek in the galaxy, is messing around with supersmall robotic computers called nanites. Soon the starship Enterprise faces the sort of high-tech terror you'd expect from a Michael Crichton novel.

ESSAY

In fact, the Crichton novel *Prey*, published last year, tells a similar story. Both the 1989 *Star Trek* episode and the scary best seller warn of disaster looming from technology's next big thing, which happens to involve the smallest objects ever manufactured.

It's an enterprise known as nanotechnology, and it promises all the wonders of a futuristic utopia, along with possible dangers that dwarf such macroworld worries as bioterrorism and nuclear war.

Wesley's nanites, and *Prey*'s nanorobots, are just two of many portrayals of nanohorror. From *Spider-Man* (the Green Goblin was a nanoscientist) to *Agent Cody Banks* (his mission: protecting the world from nanobots), fiction is full of examples of villainy from the realm of the ultratiny — the nanoworld.

Nano is shorthand for nanometer, a billionth of a meter, and nanotech deals with objects smaller in size than 100 nanometers or so. Imagine inflating a nanobot to the size of a flea; a proportional enlargement would make a flea the size of Tyrannosaurus rex.

Nano-sized structures, many high-tech visionaries believe, will launch a new, nanoindustrial revolution. In the minds of the most imaginative, the nanofuture belongs to nanobots, computerized creatures smaller than most molecules but loaded with sensing skills, made from lifeless matter

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DEAN HOLLINGSWORTH/Staff Illustration

This month, Mars is a popular travel destination

U.S., Europe plan to launch spacecraft that will study sites on the Red Planet

By ALEXANDRA WITZE
Science Writer

Mars is having a fare sale, and several space agencies have bought one-way tickets. Travel must commence in June.

Neither Europe nor the United States is passing up this summer's rare opportunity as Earth passes Mars in its orbit, lowering the amount of fuel required to get there.

SPACE

Monday afternoon, the European Space Agency plans to launch its first Mars mission, the Mars Express. NASA hopes to follow suit on Sunday and again on June 25, each time rocketing an identical remote-controlled rover into space.

After a seven-month journey, the three spacecraft should arrive at Mars in late December and early January 2004. Also on track to arrive in January is Japan's Nozomi mission, which is four years behind schedule.

"We call it the Mars traffic jam," says Mark Adler of the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, Calif.

NASA has even added a new dish antenna to its deep-space communications complex near Madrid, in part to cope with the flood of signals expected from Mars.

Scientists are anxiously awaiting results from the new missions, even though two U.S. spacecraft are already orbiting Mars. Mars Global Surveyor, launched in 1996, and Mars Odyssey, launched in 2001, constantly send back photographs of the dusty, windswept Martian terrain.

Yet NASA is still trying to live down two embarrassing disasters — the 1999 losses of the Mars Climate Orbiter, doomed by a mixup between metric and English measurements, and the Mars Polar Lander, which probably crashed because of a premature engine shutdown. Those failures forced NASA to re-evaluate its ambitious program for exploring Mars.

Now, the agency hopes that

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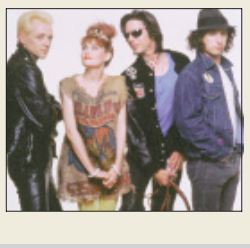
Agence France-Presse/NASA

A new Mars composite photo shows a dust storm raging.



TODAY'S GUIDE

Things to do

- X (left) at Trees. Doors open at 8 p.m.
- The series premiere of *For Love or Money*, 8 p.m., Channel 5
- A six-course Belgian beer dinner, 7 p.m., the Meridian Room

For more events, go online to GuideLive.com.

INSIDE

Stem cell step

Scientists find a long-sought "master gene" in embryonic stem cells that helps give those cells their ability to regenerate. **2E**

COMING THURSDAY

Picture this

The seventh annual Fashion!Dallas/Kim Dawson Model Search gets under way. **Texas Living: Fashion!Dallas, Section E**