



IMAGOPA/LAMY

A man's world? Women researchers accuse some societies of being old boys' clubs.

younger men on the slate came in for the same treatment, she says.

Sullivan presented data from her NSF study at last year's meeting, arguing that the union's tactics were turning it "from an old boys' club into an old men's society". For the first time, the entire slate of prospective fellows was inducted without criticism. "I think the organization has been an old boys' club," says president-elect

Erica Dunn, of the Canadian Wildlife Service in Ottawa. "But the mood is to change."

For Robin Bell, a geophysicist at Columbia University in New York who has an NSF grant to promote women in Earth sciences, change can't come soon enough. "This is a civil rights issue," she says. "We are trying to create women leaders at the institutional level." ■
Rex Dalton

on it. The only object more reflective in the Solar System is Enceladus, a saturnian moon that gets its shiny surface from geysers, which spew water into the object's freezing atmosphere, creating ice on the surface.

Analysis of light reflected by UB₃₁₃ shows that its high reflectivity is probably due to a coating of frozen methane. But that prompts questions about

how the methane got there, and why cosmic rays, which split hydrogen atoms from methane molecules, have not added a layer of soot to the surface. This process is thought to be responsible for red patches on Pluto's surface, which reflects a maximum of 60% of the light that falls on it.

"Why does it have higher ice coverage than Pluto? We don't

understand it well," says Bertoldi. The body may be leaking methane from its warmer interior. Or it could be because UB₃₁₃ used to be much closer to the Sun, so it may have had a methane atmosphere that froze to its surface as it moved farther out. The same fate probably awaits Pluto as its elliptical orbit takes it away from the Sun. ■

Jim Giles

2003 UB₃₁₃

Light reflected: 86%
Surface temperature: -248 °C
Diameter: 2,400 km
Distance from the Sun: 97 AU



ON THE RECORD

"ESA is the only space agency to have science operations under way around four planets: Venus, the Moon, Mars and Saturn."

David Southwood, director of the European Space Agency's science programmes, gets a bit confused about what constitutes a planet.

"It didn't come from a toilet on a plane or anything like that."

Charles Glass of the Oakland Fire Department in California discusses a mysterious chunk of ice that fell from the sky and left a metre-sized crater in a city park. Meteorologists say that storms could not have made the ice.

Sources: ESA, Associated Press

SCORECARD

Freedom of speech
Mark Tushingham, a scientist at Environment Canada, is ordered not to give a public talk about his futuristic novel *Hotter Than Hell*, in which droughts resulting from global warming cause Canada and the United States to go to war over water resources.

H5N1 preparedness
A survey of public-health workers in the United States reveals that more than 40% say they wouldn't show up at work in the event of an influenza pandemic.

NUMBER CRUNCH

The potential effects on your health of eating chicken nuggets and fries vary depending on the country they're made in — an effect largely dictated by the cooking oil used, according to a recent survey.

50% of food samples contained levels of *trans* fatty acids linked to an increased risk of heart disease.

38% was the *trans*-fatty-acid content of KFC chicken nuggets bought in the Czech Republic, the highest in the survey.

1% was the *trans*-fatty-acid content of similar nuggets bought in Spain.

Source: Stender, S., Dyerberg, J. & Astrup, A. *N. Engl. J. Med.* 354, 1650-1652 (2006)