

Bib·li·o·Tēch

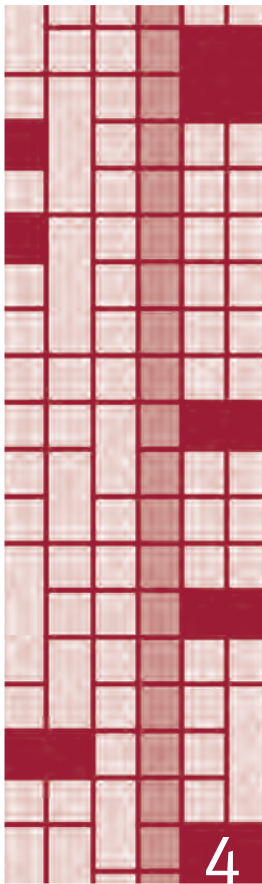
NEWS FROM THE MIT LIBRARIES

MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY VOLUME 20, NUMBER 1

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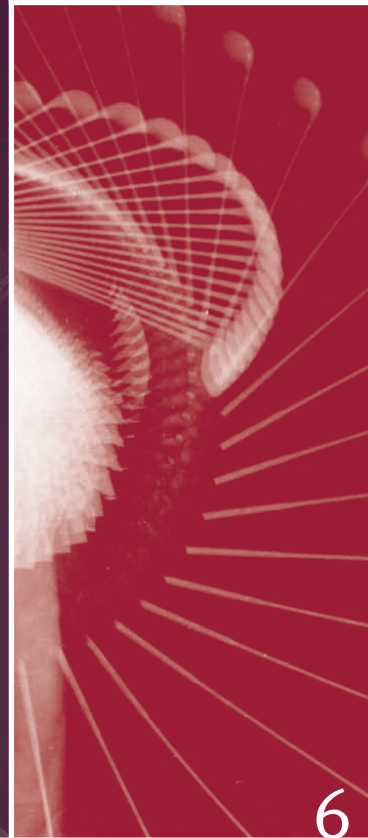
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FROM THE DIRECTOR



Photo by Richard Howard

People are worried about books. On numerous occasions over the past six months a faculty member, trustee of the corporation, administrator, student, or alumnus/a of MIT has asked me about the future of books. People who themselves cannot imagine life without books wonder earnestly whether the MIT Libraries still buy books. Do MIT students and faculty still read, they ask? Will electronic books soon replace printed works? Is Amazon's Kindle or Sony's e-book Reader the magic bullet that will relegate printed books to history?

I'm not sure why this question has surfaced quite so vividly, especially at a time when overall book publishing remains strong. According to R.R. Bowker, U.S. title output rose 3% in 2006 (the most recent year for which data are available) to an estimated 291,920 new titles and editions. And if Steve Jobs really said nobody reads any more, he not only overlooked the 73% of Americans who do read books, he insulted the 27% who read 15 or more books per year.

Are we now to believe, like the philosopher and literary critic George Steiner, that "the age of the book is about gone?" Or do we side with the historian Barbara Tuchman when she asserts that "Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill."

The people who ask me about the future of books always hasten to add that they, themselves, are still buying books and reading books as much as they ever have. And although many have purchased e-book reading devices and are intrigued by the potential of the technology, they are also doubtful about the cost, durability, and content availability of the devices.

When pressed, it appears that for some the concern about the future of books is more accurately a concern for the modes of thinking and learning that books enable. Alvin Toffler may have expressed this notion best when he wrote: "The illiterate of the 21st century will not be those who cannot read and write, but those who cannot learn, unlearn, and relearn." Books are surrogates for those opportunities to pursue unscripted intellectual growth and self-directed learning – and relearning.

MIT alumni report that ten years after graduation, the acquisition of new skills, an expanding knowledge base, and the ability to think creatively and integrate across disciplines are among the important values in their lives. It should not come as a surprise that people who have experienced learning from books, and who value the mental process books require of us, fear the loss of this form of thinking.

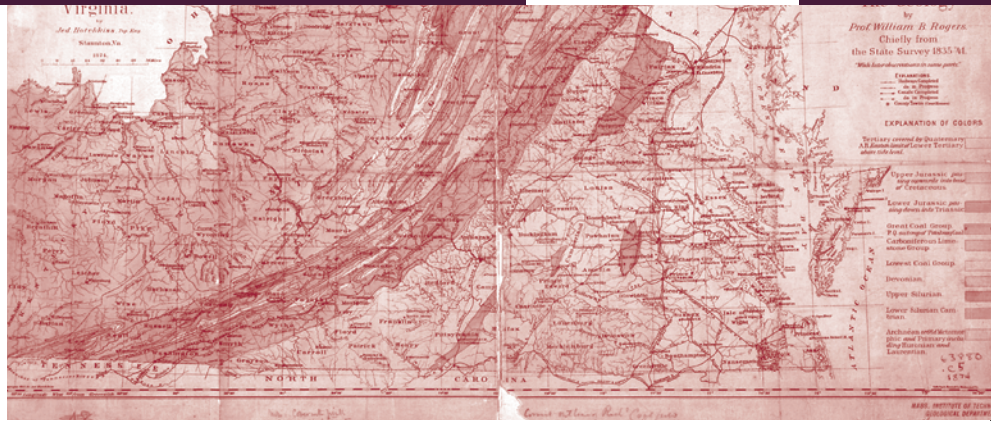
Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill.

Barbara Tuchman

MIT expects its librarians to be forward-thinking in the mission-critical job of acquiring information resources needed by MIT faculty and students. So we too are experimenting with e-book devices and subscribing to electronic book collections. Early observations from librarians indicate that the MIT community wants e-books for text-searching, data mining, the quick location of quotations/citations, and bibliometric analysis. But they want print books for reading. And happily, book borrowing and in-library reading appear to be holding steady or increasing on this campus.

So the MIT Libraries will continue to provide space and opportunity and a variety of information resources to our community. We will continue to put books in front of students for all the purposes this durable and serviceable format supports. We remain grateful for the support of an administration and donors who enable the purchase of science fiction, poetry, good fiction and nonfiction works. And we look forward to the day more MIT students can proudly claim to be in the top 8% of book readers who read 51 or more books per year.

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Left: Detail of a ceiling ornament from *A Description of Tremont House, with architectural illustrations* by William Havard Eliot, 1830. Top right: *Map of Virginia by Jed. Hotchkiss. The Geology by Wm. B. Rogers.* 1874. Middle: *Running Bulls*, by Santiago Calatrava, 2000. Bottom right: *Hand colored woodcut of dogs from Icones animalivm...* by Konrad Gesner, 1553.

A CELEBRATION OF GIFTS

THE INAUGURAL EXHIBIT OF THE LIBRARIES' MAIHAUGEN GALLERY

The MIT Libraries collections began in 1862 with a gift from the Secretary of the Corporation, and the generosity of alumni, faculty, and friends has contributed to their growth over the years. It is therefore fitting that the opening exhibition in the Maihaugen Gallery, itself a gift from an anonymous donor and the family of Paul G. Gregory III, showcases some of the donations that make our collections significant.

Among the treasures that will be exhibited to the public for the first time are items in the collection of the Institute's founder, William Barton Rogers. These include his personal copy of the 1713 edition of Sir Isaac Newton's *Principia Mathematica*, an albumen print of a trilobite discovered by Rogers in Braintree, Massachusetts and his map of *The Geology of Virginia*, which was well used in the Department of Geology & Geophysics and Lindgren Library before being transferred to special collections.

The exhibit will feature two examples from the many collections of faculty papers that can be found in the Institute Archives: an original notebook of Harold "Doc" Edgerton along with a large-scale reproduction of the 1938 stroboscopic photograph of golfer Bobby Jones; and publications and research tapes of indigenous languages by linguist Kenneth Hale.

The exhibit will include milestones in the history of science and American literature as well. Several rare books contributed by I. Austin Kelly '26, including a first edition of Walt Whitman's *Leaves of Grass* and a book of illustrations from the 1553 volume *Icones animalivm* by Konrad Gesner, founder of modern zoology, will be shown. Also featured in the exhibition are examples from the personal library of architect Charles Bulfinch, balloon prints from the Vail Collection, books by architect Santiago Calatrava with original artwork, and examples from the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture.

The Libraries look forward to sharing these treasures from the collections and many more in an ongoing series of exhibits. The inaugural exhibit, *A Celebration of Gifts*, opens Friday, April 18, 2008.

See news-libraries.mit.edu/blog/category/events/exhibits for more information.

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MAIHAUGEN GALLERY

Thanks to the generosity of donors, the once blank corridor wall outside the Archives has been transformed into a literal window into MIT's remarkable special collections. With a secure, climate-controlled space, the Libraries now have a public place to display some of the extraordinary items from the collections. The first exhibit, *A Celebration of Gifts*, opens Friday, April 18, 2008 with a community celebration at 1 pm. Regular gallery hours will be Monday–Thursday, 10 am–4 pm. The new facility is located adjacent to the Institute Archives (14N-118).

A PUZZLING CHALLENGE

PROMOTING LIBRARY RESOURCES, THE MIT WAY

On Tuesday, October 16 a curious thing appeared on page 11 of *The Tech*. In between “Dilbert” and the crossword puzzle was a box that contained a list of cryptic-looking numbers and a challenge to MIT students, “Think you can solve it?” Students were asked to send their answers to the MIT Libraries.

Those who accepted the challenge discovered the numbers were International Standard Serial Numbers (ISSN) corresponding to published journals. The first letter of each journal spelled out “Search column two in Compendex.”

Compendex is an engineering database that provides abstracts and full bibliographic citations for journal articles, conferences and reports in engineering fields. It is available through Vera, the Libraries’ online resource for databases and e-journals. Students who deciphered the puzzle found the numbers to be Compendex accession numbers, each of which corresponded with an article published in one of the journals. With a little more work, they got to the final answer of “Dmitri Mendeleev.”

Seriously, what MIT student wouldn’t be intrigued by a cryptic list of numbers, especially if it isn’t on a P-set? Usman Akeju

The Compendex puzzle was the first in a series of three puzzles launched by the Libraries during the Fall semester of 2007. The puzzles appeared in *The Tech*, on posters in lobby 7, and on flyers distributed around campus. The goal of the Libraries’ Puzzle Challenge was to generate awareness of the Libraries’ resources by encouraging students to find solutions to the puzzles using different library tools and resources. Students who submitted correct answers on the web page, libraries.mit.edu/puzzle, were entered into a drawing for an iPod Nano.

The Libraries awarded a Nano to the winner of each puzzle drawing. The number of responses to the puzzles varied based on the degree of difficulty of each puzzle. The first puzzle had 48 submissions, the second had 116, and the third had 62. Puzzle two, which received the most answers, featured the Dewey Research Advisor tool. The online tool typically receives 250 queries per month, however during November when it was featured in the puzzle, the number of queries jumped to 1,953!

“The puzzles were unexpected, entertaining, and a welcome distraction from everyday work,” Usman Akeju, a senior in electrical engineering and computer science, said. Akeju completed all three puzzles and won the drawing for an iPod for the third puzzle. “Seriously, what MIT student wouldn’t be intrigued by a cryptic list of numbers, especially if it isn’t on a P-set?” he added.



Photo by L. Barry Hetherington

Mat Willmott

PUZZLEMASTER REVEALED

The mastermind behind the puzzles is MIT Libraries' physics liaison, Mathew Willmott. Willmott first got into puzzles as an undergrad at MIT when he competed in MIT's annual IAP puzzle competition, the Mystery Hunt. "I got hooked really quickly," Willmott says of his first Mystery Hunt experience. "I stayed up all night until like 7 in the morning working on it."

Willmott began his career with the Libraries as a student assistant in the Aero-Astro library. He majored in math and physics and minored in music (he's also an accomplished saxophone player who played in the MIT band). After he graduated in 2003 he worked briefly for a software company, but returned to MIT for a full-time job at the Libraries, where he handles collections and outreach for physics and astronomy. He's currently taking graduate classes toward a master's degree in mathematics and plans to pursue a master's in library science as well.

A natural puzzle-solver, Willmott said he enjoys working at the Libraries, where he helps people find the information they need. He admits he was initially surprised when he was asked to write the puzzles for the Libraries' Puzzle Challenge, "I can't imagine another job where they would say, 'Go write some puzzles!'" he said.

For Willmott, a good puzzle is "elegant" in its design. "I'm new to designing puzzles but I'm getting better at it," he said. Willmott will be getting more practice when the Puzzle Challenge continues into the spring semester. To keep track of the Libraries' Puzzle Challenge, and see puzzles and solutions from last semester, go to: libraries.mit.edu/about/puzzle/archive.

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COMBINING INVESTMENT WITH PHILANTHROPY NEW OPPORTUNITY FOR LIBRARIES SUPPORTERS

Friends of the Libraries who wish to receive income while making a gift can now invest in the MIT endowment. As the result of an IRS private letter ruling, donors who establish a charitable remainder unitrust can now increase both their income and the benefit of their gift to the Libraries.

A unitrust is a fund in your name, managed by MIT, that pays you income for life. Specifically, the unitrust pays five percent of its market value each year to you and/or the beneficiary you choose. At the end of its term, any remaining assets support the Libraries.

The IRS ruling allows the Institute to invest these unitrusts with the MIT endowment. This arrangement will provide the trusts with approximately the same performance rate as the endowment, which has averaged a 15.3% return over the past ten years and this past year earned a rate of 22.1%.

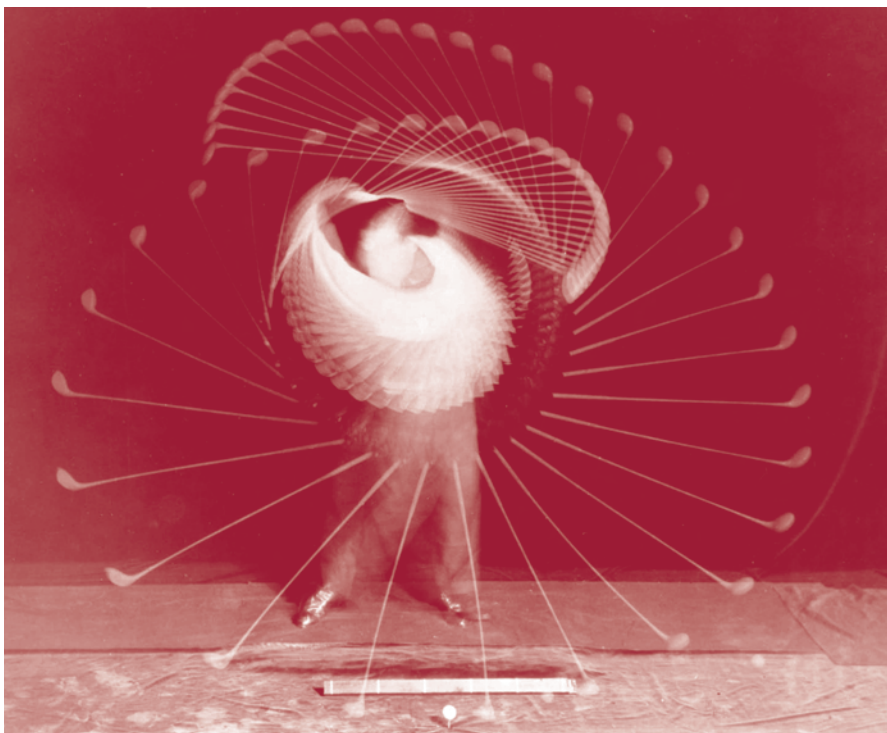
When you establish an MIT unitrust, you:

- Increase your current income
- Avoid capital gains tax on appreciated assets
- Diversify your portfolio
- Receive free professional asset management
- Obtain a charitable income tax deduction
- Reduce your estate tax liability
- Receive full gift credit
- Support the important work of the MIT Libraries

The minimum to establish a charitable remainder unitrust is \$100,000. Income beneficiaries must be age 50 or older. For more information about investing in the MIT endowment, contact Judy Sager, Director of the Office of Gift Planning, at 617 253 6463, or email jsager@mit.edu.

FROM THE ARCHIVES

PERSONAL PAPERS OF FACULTY OFFER INSIGHTS BEYOND RESEARCH



© Harold E. Edgerton 1992 Trust

Photograph of golfer Bobby Jones from Harold “Doc” Edgerton notebook.

Beyond collecting the administrative history of MIT, the MIT Institute Archives & Special Collections is home to the personal archives of many of MIT’s most notable faculty.

Personal papers provide the primary source, one-of-a-kind, documentary evidence of the research, professional, and personal activities of MIT’s extraordinary faculty. The papers of MIT faculty include significant information about influential lives, national/international policies, cutting-edge research, teaching methodologies, and the history and influence of the Institute. Due to the prominence of MIT’s faculty, the Archives collections are unparalleled in the documentation of post-World War II science and technology and related social and political issues.

The breadth of topics is astounding. In their personal papers one can find: the notes and maps of Kevin Lynch’s research of Boston’s cityscape; the notebook recording Jay Forrester’s discovery of magnetic core memory; the diaries of the early MIT professor Robert Richards’ mining excursions; the photographs of “neuron-scientist” F.O. Schmitt’s research on giant squids; the work of Jerrold Zacharias on the re-development of science education; the research notebooks of physicist Bruno Rossi during his time in Eritrea, Africa; and the early thoughts of paradigm-shifting historian of science Thomas Kuhn.

Fascinating working relationships are also revealed in faculty papers. In Harold “Doc” Edgerton’s papers one can find the 1965 correspondence and notebooks documenting a discussion between Edgerton and Vannevar Bush on the physics

of baseball. After reviewing images snapped by Edgerton of a batter hitting a baseball, Bush remarked in a letter, “One thing is strange in this foul tip picture. The ball must be rotating rapidly after leaving the bat. It should curve, but its path is very straight. Perhaps this is tied in with the ‘breaking’ of a curve pitched ball. I believe ‘breaking’ is real, not just an optical illusion. It takes time to set up the flow around a rotating ball to cause it to curve...More later perhaps. At any rate this is interesting stuff.”

There are insights into personal experiences as well. Norbert Weiner’s papers contain a letter from Wiener to his sister describing his first meeting with Einstein on a European train ride in the summer of 1925. Weiner described Einstein as follows, “Personally he is simple, direct, unaffected and rather winning. His enormous intellectual energy, his clear vision and sense of physical reality, and his enthusiasm strike the most casual observer. He is aware of his great position, but not in the least conceited. He does not expect relativity in its present form to last many decades, and hopes that further work will soon go beyond it.”

To learn more about the personal archives of faculty that can be found in the Institute Archives, see: libraries.mit.edu/archives/research/manuscripts.html.

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© Harold E. Edgerton 1992 Trust

Photograph of baseball batter from Harold “Doc” Edgerton notebook.

SUPPORTING THE LIBRARIES

AN 'OUT-OF-THIS-WORLD' GIFT FOR SCIENCE FICTION



Photo by Nicholas McIntosh

Barbara Ostrom pictured in a sci-fi world.

MIT alumna Barbara Ostrom '78 is a self-proclaimed bookworm. "I started reading in first grade, when the summer reading program gave you stickers for each book you read," she says. "I really racked-up those stickers!" At an early age Ostrom volunteered in school libraries. Today her personal library contains well over 3,000 books. "I've had a hand in libraries almost my whole life," she says. Her recent gift to the MIT Libraries—a \$55,000 endowment for the science fiction collection—reflects her passion for reading and for libraries, as well as her special interest in the sci-fi genre.

Ostrom is currently a transportation engineer at MACTEC, an engineering and consulting firm, where she is a principal investigator on several projects for the Federal Highway Administration. At MIT she studied civil engineering, but during her years as an undergraduate she could just as often be found devouring a novel as cracking an engineering text. "It wasn't so much finding the time for recreational reading [at MIT]. It was more a matter of getting to books." Ostrom would often go to the Boston Public Library to peruse their selection of fiction. She also

Barbara Ostrom's Recommended Reading for MIT Students:

Starship Troopers

The Case of the Toxic Spell Dump

1632

Have Spacesuit Will Travel

Young Miles

March Upcountry

found books through MIT's science fiction society. She first got hooked on science fiction in junior high when she read *The Phantom Tollbooth*, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, and *The Lord of the Rings*. At MIT she discovered the *Darkover* and *Ace Doubles* series.

When she wasn't reading, Ostrom balanced an ROTC scholarship with her coursework and participated in the MIT crew and rifle teams. Her advice for today's students is to keep a balance in their life and coursework and not worry too much about grades. "Take the things that interest you," she says.

Ostrom's gift will significantly expand the Libraries' collection of science fiction and offer students more options for recreational reading. Ostrom feels the collection will also be useful in teaching, "There are enough science and technology courses and writing courses where there are professors that have interest in using science fiction. The library ought to be able to support that," she says.

Ostrom hopes the endowment will also grow with contributions from others. To learn more about adding to **The Fund for Science Fiction: Fact or Fantasy**, contact Sharon Stanczak, Director of Development, at 617 452 2123, or email stanczak@mit.edu.

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IMPROVED BOOK DELIVERY

The MIT Libraries' BookPage service now allows members of the MIT and Harvard borrowing communities to request materials for retrieval at any library on campus, including an item's home library. Only materials on four-week loan can be delivered through this service. Most books fall into this category—most journals do not. Items available for loan will be delivered in 1 business day if located at the requested library, within 2 business days if from another campus library. Requests are limited to 6 per day. An item will remain on hold at the requested library for a period of no more than 7 days, and you will be notified via email when your request has arrived.

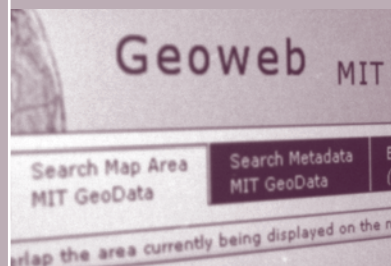


MIT ON THE ACCESS GRID

MIT researchers with grants from the National Science Foundation (NSF) are now able to use a new resource on campus to work with partners at other research universities, national laboratories, and with corporate researchers, worldwide. The Access Grid, an advanced web conferencing resource, can be used to make presentations to the NSF and multiple universities (or Access Grid nodes) simultaneously. The technology allows multiple camera feeds from each of the participating users to appear on the high-resolution displays at every site.

MIT's node on the Access Grid is a state-of-the-art facility in 9-152 that is managed by the Libraries' Academic Media Production Services (AMPS). The room is equipped with several large projection systems, cameras, a Crestron control panel, and a high-end microphone system for clear transmission. For information about this facility, including scheduling and fees, visit web.mit.edu/amps/facilities/accessgrid.htm.

MIT GEOWEB EXPANDS ACCESS TO GIS DATA



MIT GeoWeb, a new interface to the MIT Geodata Repository, enables users to access Geographic Information Systems (GIS) data once only accessible in ArcGIS, through a standard web browser.

The web interface allows users to search, view, and download GIS data and metadata from the MIT Geodata Repository, an international collection of GIS data maintained by MIT GIS Services which is jointly sponsored by the MIT Libraries, IS&T and OEIT. Users will find data in the MIT system not freely available on the web or in Google Earth and can download the data, manipulate, and analyze it in whatever system they choose. MIT certificates are required for access. To learn more and see a video tutorial go to: web.mit.edu/geoweb.

UPCOMING EVENTS

6th Annual Prokopoff Concert
Friday, April 18th, 2008
Noon — 1pm,
MIT Lewis Music Library
(14E - 109)

The Annual Prokopoff Concert honors the extraordinary collection of violin music collected by Stephen Prokopoff and donated to the Lewis Music Library by Lois Craig in 2001. This year the concert will feature music from the collection performed by some of MIT's finest student musicians.

Maihaugen Gallery Opening
Friday, April 18th, 2008
1pm — 3pm,
Maihaugen Gallery

The MIT Libraries will host a community celebration in honor of the opening of the gallery and the inaugural exhibit, *A Celebration of Gifts*. Remarks and refreshments begin at 1pm.

Located adjacent to the Institute Archives (14N-118)