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Popular Science

THE WHAT'S NEW

APRIL 1994

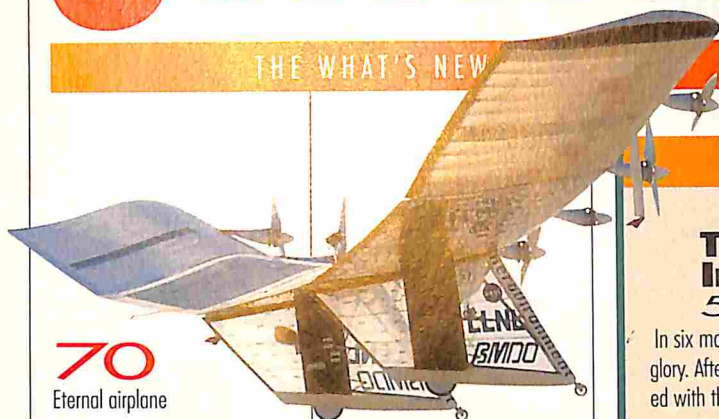
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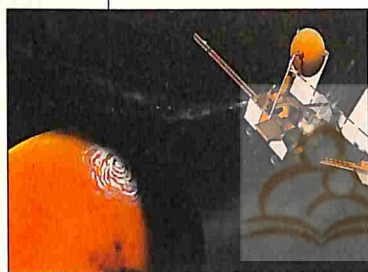
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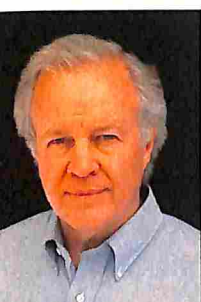
COVER PHOTO BY
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Eternal airplane



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Tragedy and
triumph



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The virtual world



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Unwired

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Traction control



FEATURES

TRAGEDY AND TRIUMPH IN SPACE 58

In six months, NASA has experienced a gamut of pain and glory. After the loss of the Mars Observer, the agency rebounded with the rescue of the Hubble Space Telescope.

UNWIRED 66

Lead by BellSouth's Simon and Motorola's Envoy, a new wave of personal digital assistants is expanding the role of a PDA by enabling you to send messages and make voice calls through thin air.

THE ETERNAL AIRPLANE 70

A plane that can fly forever? In theory, yes. Photovoltaic solar cells give the unmanned Pathfinder aircraft a limitless fuel source, while a future incarnation of the plane is slated to use fuel cells to power it after the sun sets. Pathfinder could serve as a tireless border guard, scout politically sensitive areas, or soar through the upper atmosphere collecting weather data.

THE ALUMINUM REVOLUTION 76

New metallurgical techniques and tinker-toy-like joints could bring all-aluminum cars to the masses with the new A8 Audi. More structural aluminum cars are likely to follow.

NOW PLAYING IN THE VIRTUAL WORLD 80

"Ridefilms" have transformed Las Vegas with high-tech thrills. Offering the impact of a theme park in booths and machines under one roof, they represent a prototype of urban-entertainment centers for the future.

CONTROLLING TRACTION 86

We test the greatest boon to winter driving since the Interstate to Florida by taking five American cars to the icy roads of Michigan's Upper Peninsula. Making the trek were the Cadillac Fleetwood Brougham, Chrysler Concorde, Lincoln Mark VIII, Oldsmobile 88 Royale LSS, and Saturn SL2.

Popular Science

A Times Mirror Magazine

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