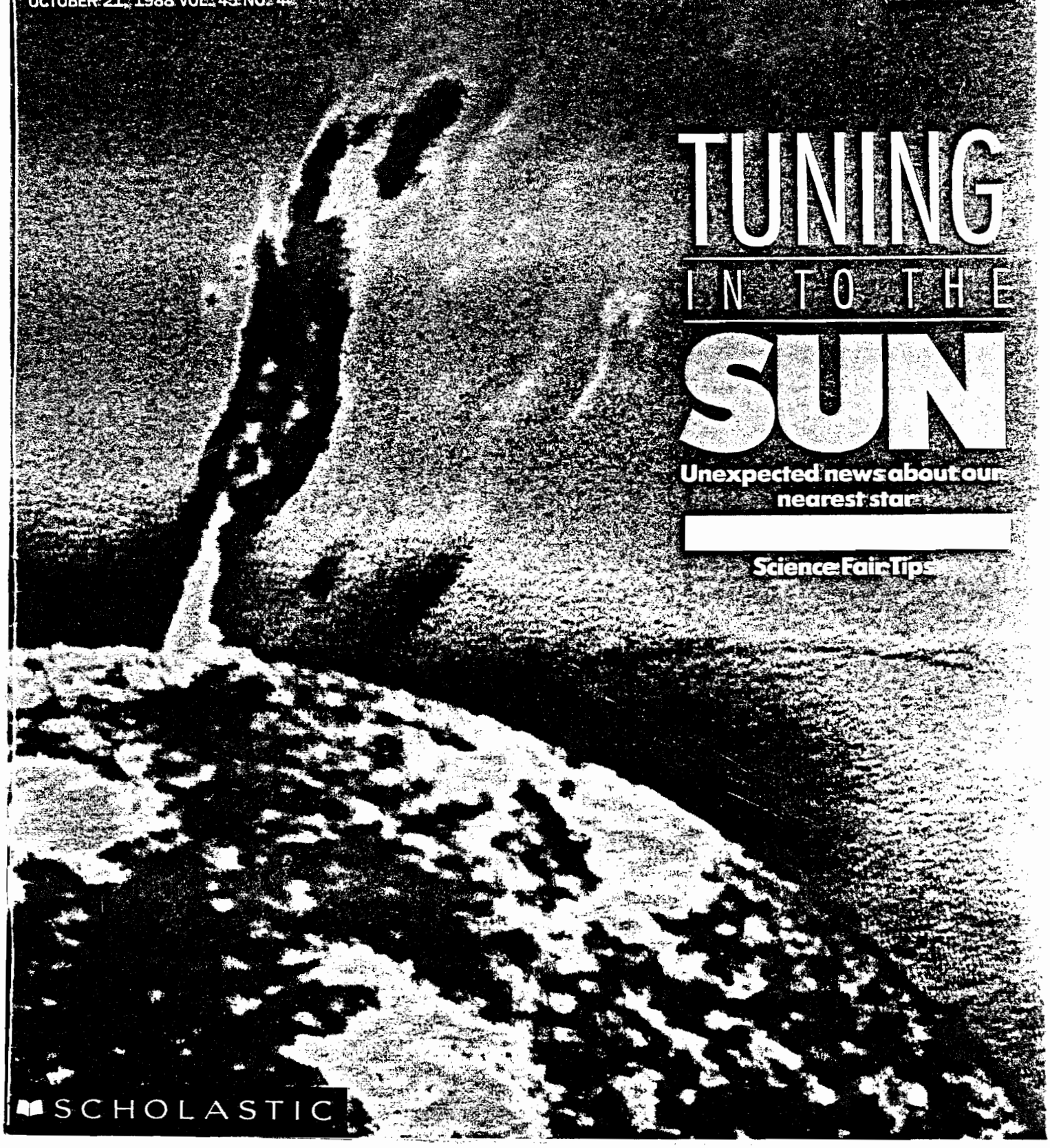
ScienceWorld®

OCTOBER 21, 1988 VOL. 45 NO. 4 (ISSN 0162-8399)



TUNING IN TO THE SUN

Unexpected news about our nearest star

Science Fair Tips

SCHOLASTIC

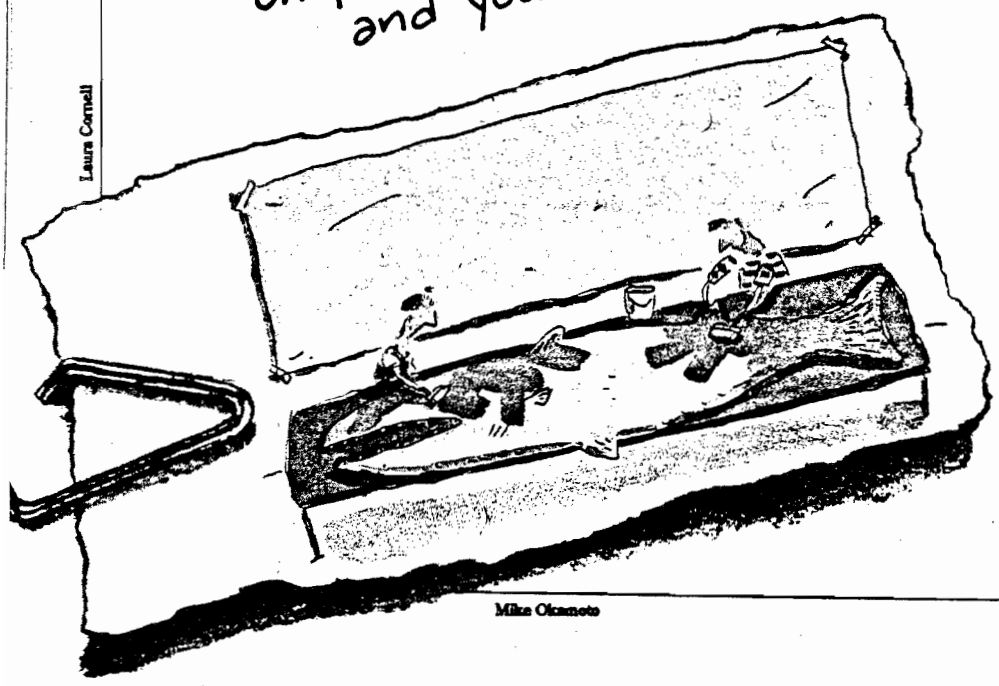
NATURE YOU

You can make prints of fish that you catch or buy, of animals you find on the side of the road, of leaves—of just about anything you want to study.

The prints will reveal details you might not readily see when you examine a specimen by hand. For instance, you'll get a sharp picture of the sensory organ in fishes called the *lateral line;* you'll be able to see the exact shape and arrangement of scales.

Such details are very important when you're trying to identify a species of animal or a type of plant. They can help you understand how different species are related. You might even want to *classify* the specimens in your collection (*see* SW, *March 11, 1988*).

Preserve your collection on paper. It's simple to do and you'll learn a lot.



Laura Cornell

Mike Okamoto

MATERIALS

paper towels
newspaper
modeling clay
straight pins
newsprint or rice paper
water-base block printing ink (for printing on paper)
T-shirt or other fabric
silkscreen ink or textile paint (for printing on fabric)
paintbrush
rubber roller (brayer)
piece of glass

PROCEDURE

Collect the leaves, fish, or other objects you wish to print. Try to get a variety of specimens.

PLANT PRINTING

STEP 1
With the brayer, roll out a thin film of ink onto the piece of glass. Place leaf on glass and apply ink to both sides.

STEP 2
Transfer the leaf to a clean piece of paper. Cover with another sheet of printing paper. Check to see that your hands are clean.

STEP 3
Rub the paper firmly with your fingers or thumb. Work slowly, rubbing over the leaf from the center out to the edge.

I CAN WEAR

STEP 4
Carefully lift off the paper to avoid smearing. Remove the leaf and set the print aside to dry.

FISH PRINTING

STEP 1
Clean off the mucus and blot the fish dry with paper towels. Position the fish on newspaper. Spread the fins and place small clay balls under them for support. Secure with pins. Plug the mouth, gills, and anus with wads of paper toweling.

STEP 2
Apply a thin layer of ink over the entire surface of the fish with a large brush. Paint the fins and tail last, as they dry quickly. Brush ink in one direction only (with the scales). Do not paint the eye since it has no definition and will not show up.

STEP 3
Place a clean sheet of paper over the inked fish. Try to avoid wrinkling the paper. (If you're printing a shirt, slip a sheet of thin plastic between the front and back.)

STEP 4
Rub your hands over the entire fish to transfer ink to paper (or fabric). Take care not to smear the ink or move the paper while rubbing.

STEP 5
Carefully lift the paper (or fabric) off the fish. After the ink dries, paint in the eye by hand using a small brush.

You can keep your fishes in the freezer and use them again. You may want to; it takes practice to get a fish print with lots of definition. —B.P.

Gregory Crambo and Joan Jung (2)