

# Caltech

magazine

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**Above:** Nick Scoville's dog, Luna, relaxes next  
to handmade chairs crafted by her owner. See  
story on page 6.

**FSC  
label  
here**

# Letters

## “Writing” Kudos

Whitney Clavin’s fascinating essay “Writing in  
the Language of Math” explores several inno-  
vative modes of expression in mathematics.  
Another example is Leonardo’s depiction of the  
formula for the volume of a dodecahedron in a  
sketch: dissected into 12 pentagonal pyramids,  
in turn into 60 tetrahedra, and reassembled into  
a figure of known volume (Codex Forster 1, folio  
7r, Fritjof Capra, *The Science of Leonardo*). In  
the digital age, writing tools such as LaTeX can  
be used to even do algebra: copy the previous  
equation; make a small legitimate change; re-  
peat. Then I am tempted to replace the dozens of  
intermediate steps with “trivial algebraic manip-  
ulation yields” for the final publication. Perhaps  
even more innovative ways of writing math can  
spring out of Fritz Zwicky’s morphological box  
applied to this topic.

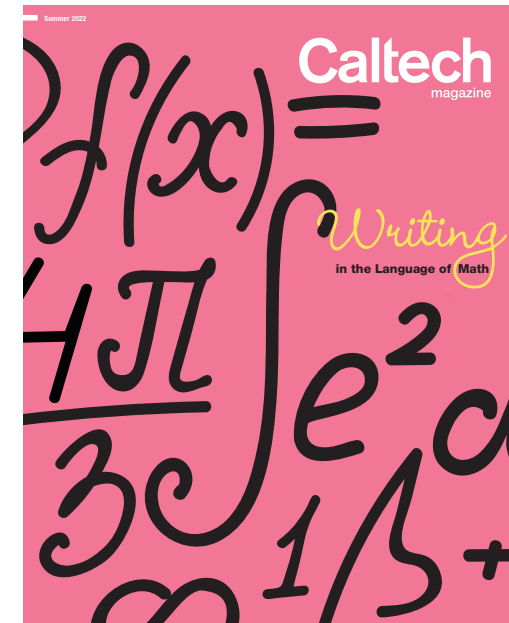
**Jeff Scargle (PhD '68)**  
MENLO PARK, CA

Just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate  
your work to help us understand cutting-edge  
science fields outside of our own—particularly  
**MATH**. Math was a real problem at CIT my  
second year—nearly flunked it. Yet as an ortho-  
paedic surgeon specializing in spine matters for  
over 40 years, I have recently ventured some-  
what tentatively into largely mathematical anal-  
yses (elementary stuff, really) of aviation crash  
issues in night approaches to so-called black  
hole airports! How the h--- did that happen?  
Caltech to me was truly a small cozy incubator,  
with cross-fertilization a primary feature!

**Robert C. Thompson, MD (BS '60)**  
HOMER, AK

Great article! I wonder if young folks nowadays  
know where the term “Carriage Return” comes  
from that lives on as ASCII character no. 13. Prob-  
ably they think of bringing back a rental car 😊

**Thomas Schnuerer** on Twitter



## A Star Is Born

Thank you, Philip Appleton, for the brilliant,  
lucid, thrilling explanation of this remarkable  
image and extension of human awareness. I  
have been a lifelong student of astronomy and  
astrophysics. The data from JWST is reawak-  
ening a keen passion in my mind to continue  
that journey of exploration. Having wonderful  
teachers and scientists to help the public see  
what they see in the data, is essential. Philip, I  
hope you do a lot more of these videos showing  
the discoveries of JWST; even about subjects  
other than Stephan’s Quintet. ... I have to tell  
you that watching this video was enlivening ... I  
have thrills and chills running up and down my  
spine. ... Thank you!

**Joseph Woodhouse** on YouTube

See the YouTube video  
“Stephan’s Quintet: Caltech  
Expert Gives a Guided Tour of  
the New JWST Image,” and  
also the story on page 4.



## For the Record

The obituary for Carl V. Larson in the Summer 2022 issue’s “In  
Memoriam” section incorrectly stated Larson’s birth year. He was  
born in 1930.



Instagram



**caltechedu** Today, we offer all new  
undergraduate and graduate  
students, and postdoctoral scholars,  
a warm welcome to Caltech! We're  
thrilled to gather at Convocation  
today with you and your families.  
#CaltechConvocation #Caltech  
21h

## Endnotes Sneak Peek

This year, the Earnest C. Watson Lec-  
ture Series turns 100. If you were to  
give a Watson Lecture, what would the  
title be, and why should people attend?

### “You Can Lead a Horse...”

People should attend to learn about the be-  
havioral psychology and economics that leads  
nations and their leadership into wars—both  
consequential and relatively trivial. Careful  
analysis and the application of game theory  
in deconstructing modern and historical wars,  
including civil war, sheds light on the opportuni-  
ties missed in avoiding the worst consequences  
and provides a basis for understanding the  
contemporary political movements shaping our  
futures.

**Mark Caruso (BS '83)**  
PALM DESERT, CA

For more Watson Lecture ideas, see Endnotes on page 40.