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Cover story

Grizzly Giant as one of the oldest trees in the world, almost ca. 2700-year old, unfortunately destroyed during the thunderstorm a few years ago can be seen on the cover. It is one of the ancient Giant Sequoia ca. 250 trees live in three groves in the Yosemite National Park in the central Sierra Nevada of California. This species grows larger in volume than any other and is one of the tallest and longest-lived. These trees were much more

widespread before the start of the last Ice Age. Increasing ozone pollution is causing tissue damage to the massive Giant Sequoia trees in the park. This makes them more vulnerable to insect infestation and disease. Since the cones of these trees require fire-touched soil to germinate, historic fire suppression has reduced these trees' ability to reproduce. The current policy of setting prescribed fires is expected to help the germination issue.

One of the outstanding example of an enterprising university is Stanford University, located between San Francisco and San Jose in the heart of Silicon Valley and recognized as one of the world's leading research and teaching institutions. The picture of one of the buildings of that University can be seen in the first picture on the cover. Leland and Jane Stanford founded the University to "promote the public welfare by exercising an influence on behalf of humanity and civilisation." The pioneering spirit that inspired Jane and Leland Stanford to start this university more than a century ago and that helped build Silicon Valley at the doorstep of the campus encourages boldness in everything what they do — whether those efforts occur in the library, in the classroom, in a laboratory, in a theatre or on an athletic field.

In the central picture on the cover one can see the Sunset Boulevard in San Francisco, California, USA, parallel to a shore line of the Pacific Ocean, with long sunbeams at the sunset.

Yosemite National Park is located in the central Sierra Nevada of California. A general view of the Yosemite National Park can be seen in the last picture on the cover. The park takes approximately 3.5 hours to drive to the park from San Francisco. The park covers an area of 3,081 km² and reaches across the western slopes of the Sierra Nevada mountain chain. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1984, Yosemite is internationally recognised for its spectacular granite cliffs, waterfalls, clear streams, Giant Sequoia groves, and biological diversity. Yosemite is one of the largest and least fragmented habitat blocks in the Sierra Nevada, and the park supports a diversity of plants and animals.

