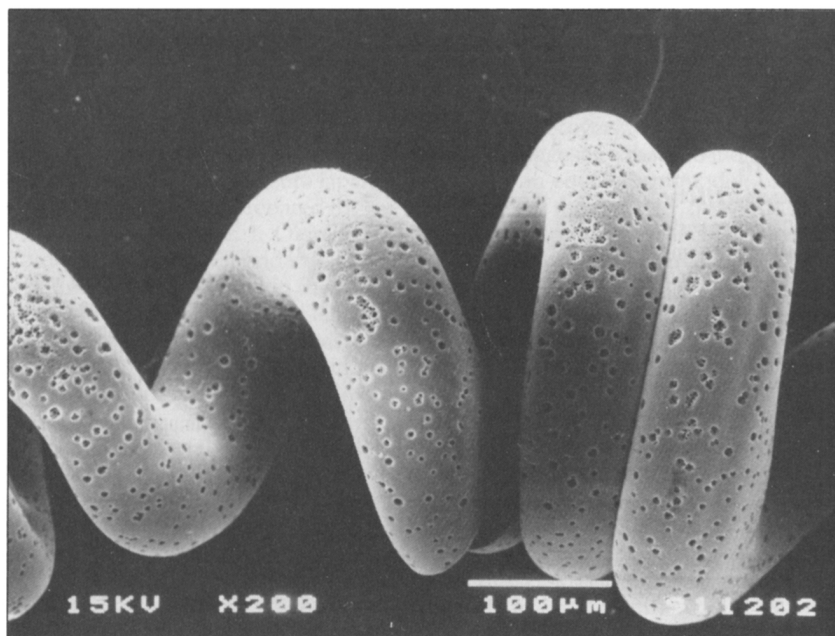


Figures appearing in the EDITOR'S CHOICE are those arising from materials research which strike the editor's fancy as being aesthetically appealing and eye-catching. No further criteria are applied and none should be assumed. When taken out of context, such figures often evoke images beyond and unrelated to the original meaning. Submissions of candidate figures are welcome and should include a complete source citation, a photocopy of the report in which it appears (or will appear), and a reproduction-quality original drawing or photograph of the figure in question.



It's hard to miss the similarity between that coiled cord connecting your telephone receiver to its set and this month's Editor's Choice. Perhaps the likeness would be more accurately portrayed if the telephone had just experienced a rather destructive fire because the coil in our figure is made of pure carbon. To reach this state, it too was put through a fire of sorts. It began, much as our telephone cord did, as a flexible polymeric material, in this case polyacrylonitrile (PAN). It was dissolved and spun and heated and coagulated and fired until only this carbon coil survived. The precise recipe was cooked up by C. Lakeman, G. Pan (no relation to PAN), N. Muto, M. Miyayama, H. Yanagida, and D. Payne, who reported it in *Mater. Lett.* **13** (1992) 330. On seeing this figure, others less familiar with telephony found it more reminiscent of their favorite form of pasta (specifically, right-handed rotini) until we pointed out the less-than-100-micron-fiber diameter, which would hardly constitute an appetizer, not to mention a full meal.

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