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#### COVER

Three-year-old viable female offspring of a male gibbon (Hylobates moloch) and a female siamang (Symphalangus syndactylus). This is the first known hybrid of apes. The general coloration and hair pattern resemble that of the siamang; however, the siamang throat sac is absent. See page 308. [Sister Moore, Atlanta, Georgia]



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### LETTERS

### Peer Review at ADAMHA

We appreciate the *Science* follow-up "Peer review comes to ADAMHA" (News and Comment, 11 May, p. 601) on the changes in peer review recently instituted by the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration. Although the article presents many events correctly, misinterpretations and errors create some confusion.

The author is correct in stating that, soon after my appointment as administrator in 1977, I viewed as one of my most important tasks the installing of a more rigorous grants review process independent of the program staff. He also is correct in reporting that the centralization of peer review in the ADAMHA institutes represents a modification of my initial proposal. But he fails to add that I am fully in accord with the changes adoped, believing firmly that they embody the principle of appropriate independence of the review process from program management.

The title "Peer review comes to ADAMHA" implies that peer review is new to ADAMHA. In fact, the ADAMHA institutes have employed peer review throughout their history. The agency's organizational predecessor-the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)-was a part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) until 1967. After 1967, NIMH, as well as the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism and the National Institute on Drug Abuse when they were established. continued to subject grant applications to peer review. However, the review committees and the review process were managed in some 30 program branches and ten divisions within the three institutes. It was this feature of the system that was changed by the reorganization.

The purpose of the new system is to provide for the independent review of grant applications by peer review groups organized and staffed in a separate organizational element in the office of each institute director. The review for scientific and technical merit of grant applications is carried out in the review organizations. The peer review groups make recommendations on the merits of individual grant applications and assign priority scores. These applications are later reviewed by the national advisory council of each institute. Grants recommended for approval by these statutory bodies may be awarded by the staff scientists and program managers who make funding decisions, taking into account the

priority scores, current priorities, and available funds. The statement that "... the new system attempts to insulate the research funding offices within ADAMHA from the staff scientists and program managers" is totally erroneous.

Furthermore, it is not true that until recently employees of the ADAMHA institutes were allowed to sit on committees that approved extramural projects. Agency employees have never been appointed to such review groups, and even federal employees from other agencies are restricted by ADAMHA policy to no more than one per committee, a provision used infrequently.

The article's inaccurate account of the prior ADAMHA peer review system and of the changes that were recently made are misleading. The author's apparent inclination to conjure up intrigue where none existed is unfortunate; for example, in using the term "scheme" to describe the reorganization of peer review. His allegation of "egregious cases of cronyism" at the National Institute on Drug Abuse is unfounded. The few contracts under review were found to involve the *appearance*, not the practice, of cronyism.

A major function of ADAMHA is the award of funds by means of grants and contracts for research, training, and services. The integrity and credibility of science in the United States depends upon the manner in which decisions are made as to the allocation of such monies. An objective, independent peer review system is essential. To treat such a serious subject in this fashion may be journalistically interesting and even titillating, but it is a disservice to *Science*'s readers.

### GERALD L. KLERMAN

Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration, Rockville, Maryland 20857

### Human Cancer: Radiation and Chemicals Compete

The widespread antinuclear alarm connected with the accident at Three Mile Island has its reflection in the title "BEIR report on radiation hazards comes unglued" (News and Comment, 8 June, p. 1062). In addition to this "ungluing" (1), my present concern is with the most laudable decision of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare (HEW) to undertake extensive studies of public health effects of the accident.

According to the *New York Times* of 20 JULY 1979

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30 May, these studies, "unprecedented in this country," will be conducted in cooperation with the state of Pennsylvania. As explained by HEW Secretary Joseph A. Califano, Jr., the ultimate purpose of the studies is to create a data base for a variety of future studies. The focus of these studies is to be the relationship between health histories, such as leukemia and birth defects, and the irradiation exposure caused by the accident.

The particular point I wish to emphasize is that the reliability of studies of the kind mentioned requires that they include not only the details of exposure to radiation, but also the exposures to noxious chemical pollutants as studied by the Food and Drug Administration. Quite a few of them are mutagenic and/or carcinogenic. Obviously, if any such pollutants were present in the ambient air in the localities studied, without being monitored and without being included in the analysis, then their health effects would be ascribed to radiation. Hence the sense of this letter: When studying health effects of irradiation, include chemical pollutants.

Another warning of a statistician is, Beware of "spurious correlations!" That is, when studying populations exposed and cases of leukemia and so forth, do not use "rates"; use actual numbers of people and numbers of leukemias counted (2).

JERZY NEYMAN

Statistical Laboratory, University of California, Berkeley 94720

#### References

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### "Female Evanescence"

The most puzzling aspect of "Burt's missing ladies" (Letters, 8 June, p. 1035) is that their nonexistence went unnoticed by the relatively small and tightly knit research community of which they were ostensibly members. Surely Conway's colleagues in the psychology department at University College, London, could have been expected to comment when a paper published from their department was authored by someone unknown to them.

A possible explanation for this curious lack of response is that women scientists are very frequently overlooked by their colleagues, a recent case in point being the failure to nominate Candace Pert for a Lasker Award (1). As a psychologist of many talents, Burt undoubtedly recognized that the scientific community would not be at all disturbed by the evanescence of his female "collaborators" and that members of the psychology department at University College could safely be assumed to accept Conway as one of those invisible women to whom it was not necessary to pay attention.

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### **Energy: A Greater Risk?**

The rather lengthy critique by Holdren, Smith, and Morris (Letters, 11 May, p. 564) of Inhaber's article "Risk with energy from conventional and nonconventional sources'' (23 Feb., p. 718) deserves comment, not so much for what it says but for what it doesn't say. There is undoubtedly value in ranking comparative risks of producing energy from conventional and nonconventional sources, particularly from the standpoint of determining where efforts may be most usefully directed to reduce prevailing risk levels. However, in terms of the magnitude of today's energy problem and its threat to national interests, such assessments appear somewhat akin to rearranging deck chairs on the Titanic as she glides through North Atlantic waters

With our heavy and increasing dependence on foreign petroleum supplies, the United States is in a precarious position. As we have seen, these supplies can be interrupted and prices can be escalated with serious consequences. The loss of Iranian production provides a graphic example of the risks inherent in excessive dependence on foreign energy supplies. The consequences of the loss of another several million barrels a day of foreign oil supplies, for whatever reasons one might wish to postulate, would be far more serious. Such an event, rather than inconveniencing drivers and disrupting holiday and vacation plans, could begin to undermine the fundamental stability of our economy and the wellbeing of our population. Employment levels, adequacy of fuel supplies for home heating, and agricultural production could each, for example, be affected. These developments, in turn,

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could have profound effects on public health. Surely, these risks must transcend those which may be associated with the development of various domestic energy sources.

Not included, of course, is the jeopardy in which the security of our nation itself would be placed if we were deprived of substantial volumes of imported petroleum over an extended period.

The point is, we as a nation must move ahead aggressively with the development domestically of *both* conventional and nonconventional energy sources and reduce our reliance on imported petroleum. The seemingly endless discussions as to which energy source may be preferable or appear unacceptable and how best to tackle the problem are strictly counter to overall national interests. Time is short, and we must get our act together before it's too late. Many of us would like to see the scientific community in the vanguard of this effort.

T. S. Wyman

Maritime Relations, Chevron Shipping Company, 555 Market Street, San Francisco, California 94105

### **Heavy Crude Oil**

Eliot Marshall's article "OPEC prices make heavy oil look profitable" (News and Comment, 22 June, p. 1283), which is concerned with the conference on Heavy Crude Oil and Tar Sands organized by the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR), the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), and the Alberta Oil Sands Technology and Research Administration (AOSTRA), contains a statement which, I believe, should be clarified. Referring to me he writes: "Apparently he found the major American oil companies inimical to his vision, for he said he consciously chose not to invite them. He did not explain further. The companies' Canadian affiliates and subsidiaries did attend, however.''

There was no anti-American bias in the selection of the participants. The largest number of participants came from the United States. However, we wanted oil companies interested in attending to write papers and share their knowledge and experience with other participants at the conference. That principle was applied to companies from all of the industrial countries. We were especially interested in obtaining papers on the occurrence of heavy crude from the major international oil companies, because most of them have some knowledge of its occurrence in practically all countries of the world. We failed in this attempt; not one single paper was submitted by any of the oil compaines on the occurrence and potential of heavy crude for any country outside of Canada. The papers we had on occurrences were written by academics or government experts and were very incomplete, including the paper from the United States. A vice president of one company told me at an early stage of preparation for the conference that no company would be willing to release such data, and his observations proved correct. Finally, we compromised and accepted papers from such companies dealing with other aspects of heavy crude and tar sands. Thus, in effect, all companies interested in the conference were able to participate. There were only two European companies who refused to write any papers, and they did not attend.

### JOSEPH BARNEA

United Nations Institute for Training and Research, New York 10017

Erratum: In the Research News article "Tournament competition fuels computer chess" (29 June, p. 1396), the figure was reproduced incorrectly. Black has a third pawn on the black square immediately in front of the black king. The figure and its legend are reproduced herewith.

One limitation of full-width search methods in computer chess is called the horizon effect. A human easily sees that white, although it has one less pawn, can win the game by advancing its leftmost pawn across the board, whereupon it is promoted, by the rules of chess, to a queen. The computer, if it does not search enough moves into the future, will not see this outcome and will be excessively concerned about black's apparent material advantage. [Drawing by Eleanor Warner]





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### **Control of Federal Publications**

Hearings have begun this month on H.R. 4572. In its present form, this bill (designed to revise Title 44 of the U.S. Code) would place government scientific and technical publications under the control of a politically appointed board. The bill should be amended to provide more safeguards for a process that is essential to the free flow of information in our society. Scientists and educators throughout the nation should examine this issue promptly and thoroughly.

Title 44 of the U.S. Code places primary responsibility for developing and administering policy for the printing and distribution of all government publications with the Joint Committee on Printing. The power of this statute has, in fact, been delegated (or relegated) to the staff of the Committee. It also defines the mission of the Government Printing Office (GPO) as that of providing all branches of government with printing, binding, and distribution services. The distribution function is managed by the office of the Superintendent of Documents, which operates 26 bookstores, a subscription and mail-order sales service, and a depository library and free distribution program.

Despite inefficiencies, this system has worked. One reason is that the executive agencies of government, in special situations and with Joint Committee approval, have developed their own printing and distribution mechanisms to serve the needs of their own constituencies.

In hearings that were held quietly in 1978, an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee reviewed the federal government's printing and distribution program. The hearings and the report\* that ensued were soon followed by the introduction of H.R. 4572 to revise Title 44. If this bill were enacted into law, a powerful government monopoly could control the printing and distribution of all government and public documents. The bill would create a presidentially appointed seven-member board of directors, who would be responsible for developing and implementing a central, comprehensive, and unified policy for printing and distributing government publications. Four voting members would be chosen from the printing and reproduction industries, organized labor, the library community, and the information industries and three nonvoting members would represent the House, the Senate, and the Office of Management and Budget. No representation from science, education, or the humanities is suggested. The chairman of the board would have total authority to regulate the distribution of all government information, whether in printed, audiovisual, or machine-readable form, and to decide issues that are appealed. The board would control the GPO through its regulations. It would appoint two general managers: a Public Printer and a Superintendent of Documents. The interests of Congress would be protected by having its printing come under the jurisdiction of the House Administration and Senate Rules committees.

The proposed system would place executive agencies at the mercy of the politically appointed board members, whose regulation of the GPO would, in effect, give them control over all government publications. The National Technical Information Service of the Department of Commerce, which distributes government or public technical reports and documents on a selfsustaining basis, would be threatened by the proposed new system.

This control would extend to publications resulting from any research supported by a federal grant or contract. The provisions could be interpreted in such a way that board approval would be required for the use of grant funds to pay page charges. The public interest will not be well served if the executive agencies of government are compelled to seek the approval of a small but powerful board for the printing and distribution of documents and other informational materials related to the agencies' business.

-MARTIN M. CUMMINGS

<sup>\*</sup>Federal Government Printing and Publishing: Policy Issues. Report of the Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Revision of Title 44 to the Joint Committee on Printing, United States Congress (Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1979).

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