Briefing:

Nobel Prizes Go Up

Thanks to some good fortune on the stock market, Sweden's Nobel Foundation is raising the amount available for the 1988 Nobel prizes by 15% to 2.5 million Swedish crowns, or about $428,000 for each of the five prizes.

According to the foundation's executive director Stig Ramel, the bonanza was achieved by putting a foundation-owned real estate company, which owns office buildings in Stockholm and Gothenburg, on the stock market. Although other stocks suffered in last October's collapse, the total market value of the company went up 58%

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last year to more than $100 million.

Alfred Nobel, who founded the prize in 1896 with $150 million, stipulated that the money be invested in "safe securities," says Ramel. Until 1953 when the government allowed the foundation to get into the stock market, the only investments were in bonds, and the relative value of the prizes shrank because of inflation. The foundation decided to put the company on the market because real estate prices have skyrocketed in the past couple of years and the government has increased real estate taxes.

Now, says Ramel, the foundation is on a strong financial footing and is worth about $800 million. Within the next few years, he says it hopes to raise prizes to equal their value when they were first awarded in 1901—which would now be between 3 and 4 million crowns. ■ **C.H.**

More NAE New Members

The following were inadvertently omitted from the earlier new members listing (25 March, p. 1483).

Dean E. Eastman, IBM Thomas J. Watson Research Center; **Helen Edwards,** Fermi National Acceleratory Laboratory; **Robert S. Elliott,** University of California, Los Angeles; **George A. Fox,** Grow Tunneling Corp., New York City; **John M. Googin,** Martin Marietta Energy Systems, Inc.; **James P. Gould,** Mueser Rutledge Consulting Engineers, New York City; **Wilson Greatbatch,** Greatbatch Enterprises, Inc., Clarence, NY; **Siegfried S. Hecker,** Los Alamos National Laboratory; **Narain G. Hingorani,** Electric Power Research Institute.

Duesberg Gets His Day in Court

Peter Duesberg, who has persisted in his claim that the human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) does not cause AIDS, finally got his day in court. The professor of molecular biology from the University of California at Berkeley debated several leading researchers at a forum on the etiology of AIDS, sponsored by the American Foundation for AIDS Research on 9 April at George Washington University in Washington, D.C. Not only did Duesberg fail to win any converts to his unorthodox position, there was vigorous head-shaking and audible groans from both the panel as Duesberg and his ally, Harry Rubin of UC Berkeley, presented their case. Neither Duesberg nor Rubin has done AIDS research. Indeed, Rubin in particular seemed unacquainted with much of the scientific literature concerning AIDS.

William Hazeltine of the Dana-Farber Cancer Center at Harvard Medical School said that Duesberg's statements demonstrate "serious confusion and misrepresentation of fact." Warren Winkelstein, an epidemiologist from UC Berkeley, said that from a public health standpoint, Duesberg's offer to have himself injected with HIV and his assertion that people with antibodies to HIV are to be "congratulated" is "highly irresponsible."

Said Winkelstein: "This epidemic can be controlled. To jeopardize these control efforts is a very unfortunate move."

In brief, Duesberg does not believe that HIV is virulent enough to cause as deadly a disease as AIDS. Instead, Duesberg maintains that a lifestyle of promiscuity and drug abuse compromises the immune system and brings about the symptoms of AIDS (*Science*, 25 March, p. 1485). AIDS researchers have amassed an enormous body of evidence that points toward HIV as the causal agent. Yet Duesberg remains unconvinced. If the G.W. session accomplished anything, it was to confirm Duesberg as odd man out. ■ **W.B.**

Telescope Builder Lured Back to Europe

In a notable example of reverse brain drain, Dutch-born astronomer Jacques Beckers has announced that he is resigning as director of the financially strapped National New Technology Telescope (NNTT) program to return to Europe. Effective 1 August, he will be joining the European Southern Observatory to do development work on that organization's Very Large Telescope, which received a $240-million funding commitment this past December.

"The NNTT was something I tried, and it didn't work," Beckers told *Science* in a telephone interview from the Tucson offices of the National Optical Astronomy Observatories. That organization, which runs the Kitt Peak, Cerro Tololo, and Sacramento Peak observatories on behalf of the National Science Foundation, is also in charge of NNTT development. "I'm disappointed. But it's time to look for something else."

The 54-year-old Beckers has lived in this country since 1962, and has been a U.S. citizen since 1969.

Indeed, he told *Science* that he hopes to return to the United States to live when he retires.

Becker was the founding director of the Multiple Mirror Telescope, an innovative facility that the University of Arizona and the Smithsonian Institution completed atop Arizona's Mount Hopkins in 1979. At the time he took over the NNTT program in 1984 it seemed to have similar momentum. The National Academy of Sciences had just endorsed a large new ground-based telescope as one of the top astronomical priorities for the 1980s, and conceptual designs for the instrument were well along.

The idea was to combine four 8-meter mirrors to produce a total light-collecting area about ten times that of the 5-meter telescope atop Palomar Mountain.

But since then, says Beckers, it has become clear that the $150-million NNTT has less and less chance of becoming reality. "It's primarily the funding climate," he says. "We've been discouraged from pursuing it at the Washington level. And in the community, people began thinking that we were chasing rainbows."

"The NNTT is still very exciting," he says. "It would be the world's largest and most sophisticated telescope." Yet the European instrument will be a close second—it will comprise a linear array of four 8-meter mirrors on independent mounts—and more important, it has been funded. "So that's where I want to spend the rest of my professional life." ■ **M.M.W.**