

Random Samples:

Author Proliferation

An item in the September issue of *Physical Review Letters* raises the question of whether we need an international Author Nonproliferation Act. The article, "Experimental mass limit for a fourth-generation sequential lepton from e^+e^- annihilations at $\sqrt{s} = 56$ GeV," is by G. N. Kim and 103 authors from 19 universities, most of them in Japan. (A companion piece seems a bit skimpy with only 75 authors from 18 universities.) The list of authors was so long it forced the usual two-page table of contents onto a third page.

Scientific value aside, the paper naturally makes one wonder what the record is for number of authors on a published paper. The National Library of Medicine recently turned up a 1986 paper in *Kansenshogaku Zasshi* ("Comparative study of MK-0787/MK-0791 and piperacillin in respiratory tract infections") by R. Soejima and 192 others from 20 institutions.

Can anyone top 193 authors? Send your entries (include a copy of the title page) to "Random Samples," *Science*, 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, D.C. 20005. Submissions must have been published in a peer-reviewed journal.

Going the Extra Meter

A civics quiz. What do these three countries have in common: Burma, Liberia, and the United States? Answer: they're the last three countries in the world not using the metric system.

All that could change as a result of the Omnibus Trade Act of 1988, signed by President Reagan in late August. A little known provision of the

bill establishes the metric unit as the preferred measurement system for U.S. trade and commerce. It also gives federal agencies until 1992 to adopt the metric system into their business dealings.

That, of course, means that industries working to get government contracts will have to go metric. But unlike 1975, when labor unions and the small-business lobby fought passage of the Metric Conversion Act, this time there's been little hue and cry about the encroaching millimeter.

One reason, says Representative George Brown (D-CA), is because the metric language was deliberately kept hidden in the trade bill to avoid confrontations with the metric-phobes who surfaced in 1975. In fact, the new measure never got a vote on the House floor. Instead, during the House-Senate

the public toward gradual voluntary use of the metric system. The trade bill "puts teeth" into the 1975 law, said Brown, who introduced similar legislation last year. Federal agencies must come up with a plan to go metric and report on their progress in each budget submission.

There's no money authorized in the bill to help agencies or industry convert. Unless the next Congress or administration proposes new funds, industry and government will have to make do with current funding levels.

The bill allows exemptions when conversion would not be cost-effective or improve competitiveness with foreign businesses. It also provides for educational assistance to companies who decide to take the plunge into metric.

The metric system became le-

Awards for Science and Engineering (CASE) fellowship based on the congressional appointment system for U.S. military academies.

Writing in the September issue of Sigma Xi's *American Scientist* magazine, Walgren outlined a 4-year fellowship of \$5000 a year for the study of science or engineering at a U.S. undergraduate school of the student's choice. Each year, one man and one woman in each of the nation's 435 congressional districts would receive the award.

Students competing for the funds would be screened by local chapters of Sigma Xi. Walgren hopes the funds would help attract additional funding for the students. The CASE funds would be administered through the National Science Foundation and would come from new appropriations rather than existing programs. When fully operational, the program would mean nearly \$18 million in scholarships each year.

"The cost of this program is well within our means, and it is hard to imagine money better spent," Walgren writes.

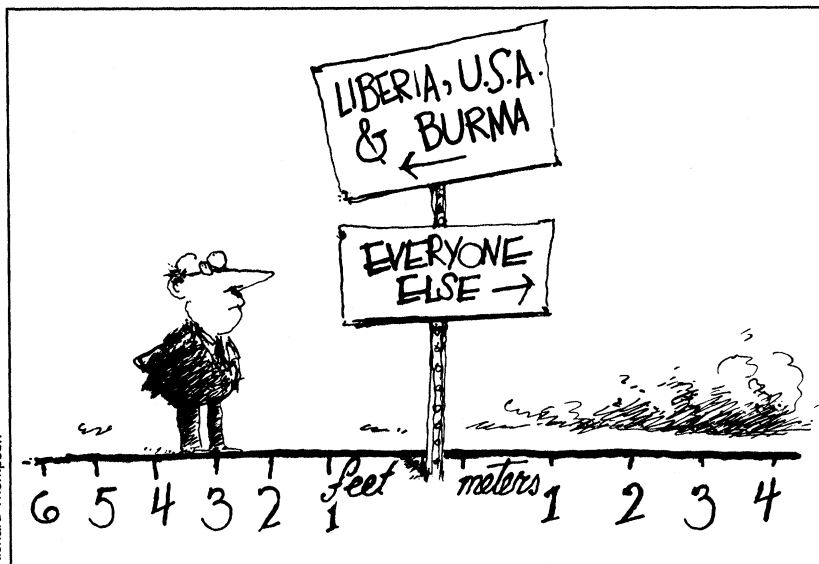
A spokeswoman for Walgren says the congressman will introduce legislation establishing the CASE before the end of the year.

Walgren, chairman of the subcommittee on science, research and technology of the House Committee on Science,

Space and Technology, said the awards might help encourage students to enter science careers, and solve the current underenrollment of students in science and engineering programs highlighted in a recent report by the congressional Office of Technology Assessment.

Sigma Xi president Thomas F. Malone of St. Joseph College in West Hartford, Connecticut, lauded the idea and said the organization would be happy to participate.

■ GREGORY BYRNE



conference on the trade bill the metric proposal was substituted for milder language favored by Senator Claiborne Pell (D-RI) and included in the Senate version.

Another reason cited by a Brown aide is that industry and unions have learned that the United States has lost its competitive edge and needs to go metric to compete again.

The new measure is stronger than the 1975 one, which established a 17-member Metric Board to nudge industry and

gal in the United States in 1866, but the federal government paid it little attention until 1968, when Congress first asked the Commerce Department to study greater use of the system.

A New Fellowship in the Making

If it works for West Point, why not for science?

So says Representative Doug Walgren (D-PA), who has proposed a new Congressional