

Random Samples:

Advising the President

"Well, first of all, the science adviser has to find the President. As matters now stand, the science adviser . . . does not have direct access to the President. . . . That wasn't the case in previous administrations. I remember during World War II, President Eisenhower insisted that the meteorologist who was giving him . . . reports on weather in the English Channel before the invasion of Normandy report to him directly. He wanted to know that meteorologist well enough so that when the meteorologist said something he could tell, 'Can I take it for sure that there's not going to be a storm, or do I have to take this with a certain amount of caution?'"—Nobel laureate physicist Steven Weinberg answering the question "How does a scientist advise his government?" on the 23 September "Bill Moyers' World of Ideas" on PBS.

The Top Ten Nuclear Power Plants . . .

As concern over the greenhouse effect mounts, observers increasingly are addressing the need to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels and make most efficient use of the power sources we have. Even nuclear power—long the bugbear of environmentalists—may get a second hearing.

So who's got the most efficient nuclear power plants? *Nuclear Engineering International*, a British trade magazine, recently listed the capacity factors of nuclear reactors: a comparison of a plant's actual production compared with its potential if operating continuously at 100% power.

The magazine's top ten most efficient plants:

1. Genkai 2, Japan (99.8%).
2. Pickering 7, Canada (97.7%).

3. Bruce 6, Canada (95.5%).
4. St. Lucie 1, United States (93.9%).
5. TMI 1, United States (93%).
6. Loviisa 2, Finland (92.7%).
7. Hunterston A1, United Kingdom (92.4%).
8. Loviisa 1, Finland (92.7%).
9. TVO 2, Finland (92.3%).
10. Paks 2, Hungary (92.3%).

... Patent-Procurers in the U.S. ...

One index of the decline in American competitiveness is the number of U.S. patents now going to foreign-owned corporations. Intellectual Property Owners, Inc., a Washington, D.C.-based membership organization, keeps track of which companies are getting the most patents each year. Based on information from the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office, the list for 1987 is:

1. Canon K.K. (847 patents).
2. Hitachi, Ltd. (845).
3. Toshiba Corp. (823).
4. General Electric Co. (779).
5. U.S. Philips Corp. (687).
6. Westinghouse Electric Corp. (652).
7. IBM Corp. (591).
8. Siemens A.G. (539).
9. Mitsubishi Denki K.K. (518).
10. RCA Corp. (504).

The list does not reflect mergers, acquisitions, and name changes, and patents issued to subsidiaries are included with the parent company's total.

It's the first time Canon has topped the list, and the first time Mitsubishi has been higher than 13th. What brings a tear to the eye of American industrialists is the continued slippage of GE, the clear champ in the early 1980s. In 1982, GE led the list with 739 patents, the closest competition being Hitachi, with 476. But by 1986 Hitachi had taken the lead, 731

to 714 patents. In 1987, as the list shows, the gap grew even wider.

... and Grant-Getters

Finally, which universities are getting the most National Institutes of Health (NIH) extramural grant money? For 1987 (the most recent year for which complete data are available), the answer is Johns Hopkins University.

Here's the top ten in fiscal year 1987, according to NIH.

1. Johns Hopkins University (\$129 million).
2. University of California, San Francisco (\$117 million).
3. Yale University (\$104 million).
4. University of Washington, Seattle (\$102 million).
5. Stanford University (\$96 million).
6. Harvard University (\$95 million).
7. University of California, Los Angeles (\$95 million).
8. Columbia University (\$88 million).
9. University of Pennsylvania (\$84 million).
10. Washington University, St. Louis (\$81 million).

Crossing the Border

In January 1988, the state of Illinois began requiring couples to undergo testing for the presence of HIV antibody before a

marriage license could be issued. Illinois residents have responded by voting with their feet: they're getting married in neighboring Wisconsin instead.

Edward A. Belongia and associates at the Wisconsin Division of Health report in the 7 October issue of *JAMA* that marriages of Illinois couples in the five Wisconsin counties that border Illinois increased from 53 in the first quarter of 1987 to 306 in the same period of 1988. At the same time, marriages of Wisconsin couples statewide actually decreased from 4149 to 3926.

The Kenosha (Wisconsin) Twins certainly didn't help. The class A minor league team promoted a game with the Rockford (Illinois) Twins, by sponsoring a pregame mass marriage. "You supply the bride, and we supply the diamond," ran the ads. Of the 13 couples who tied the knot that day, 11 were from Illinois.

The authors report that it may be time for Illinois to rethink its HIV testing requirement. Of the 44,726 individuals tested through April, only 5 were positive for HIV infection. Given current physician and lab fees in the state, Belongia estimates that adds up to \$715,000 for each identified case of HIV infection. Of course, no one knows how many possible cases of AIDS were prevented by the program.

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