RANDOM SAMPLES

edited by RICHARD STONE

Kinsey Institute Unhappy Again

"There is no staff to answer your call," announces an answering machine at the Kinsey Institute, "due to extensive budget cuts by Indiana University." Ouch. The renowned institute for research on sexual behavior is losing no opportunity to remind people that its parent institution, Indiana University (IU), cut its payment to Kinsey by 50% this year. If this sounds like a sign of bad blood between the two facilities, it is.

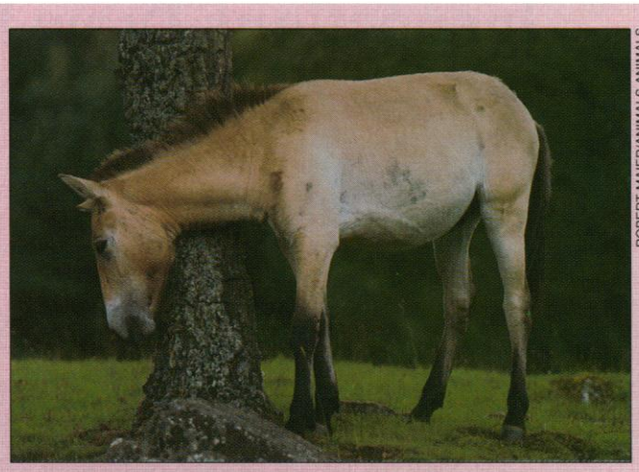
Tension first cropped up in 1988, when an internal IU review charged Kinsey's director, June Reinisch, with mismanaging institute funds and mishandling its research program. IU asked Reinisch to resign, but—with full support from Kinsey's board of trustees, the only body with authority to fire her—Reinisch refused. Reinisch then counterattacked, filing a lawsuit to force IU to make public all the review board's documents (*Science*, 17 April 1992, p. 304).

Signs of a truce in the academic war appeared this February when IU president Thomas Ehrlich issued a formal apology to Reinisch, who then left the institute on her own accord in April. Kinsey staff looked forward to a return to normalcy after 5 turbulent years. "We firmly believed we were about to face a new era," says interim Kinsey director Stephanie Sanders.

But now Sanders predicts that normalcy is still far, far away. The most serious consequence of the $250,000 cutback, she asserts, is that Kinsey may have a tough time wooing a "world-class director"—university funding pays institute salaries. Kinsey's research will continue unabated, courtesy of outside funding, which amounts to several hundred thousand dollars per year.

The university claims the budget cuts weren't hostile. In a press statement, IU's vice president for research George Walker said the university wants to "assist [Kinsey] to become more competitive in obtaining outside funding." He added that IU seeks a more productive relationship with the institute, although he declined to explain how the cuts would improve relations.

Sanders too says she hopes to rekindle a close relationship between Kinsey and IU. But unless that day comes soon, Sanders says, Kinsey "may have no alternative but to seek a new home where it is considered an asset worth maintaining and nourishing."



ROBERT MAIER/ANIMALS ANIMALS

A real wild one? The Przewalski's horse, now a zoo attraction, may be returned to the wilds of Mongolia.

Zoo Horse May Heed Call of the Wild

Some 30 years ago, the last Przewalski's horse mysteriously vanished from the Mongolian steppes, and today the only surviving petite, light tan horses live in zoos. But a new herd may soon form in Europe, put together from the zoo animals. After zoologists observe it to ensure that it is, indeed, functioning as a herd—after all, there hasn't been one in the wild for half a century—the horses will be transported back to Mongolia. This time, however, the horses will call the Gobi Desert their home.

The new Przewalski herd is part of an "action plan" for conserving and restoring Mongolia's biodiversity. The plan is being devised by researchers working for the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). It will call for returning the horses (*Equus przewalskii*) to the Gobi, rather than to the steppes, because the steppes have run out of room. "Only 2% of Mongolia's land is arable, so you're not going to endear yourself to local people by taking the fertile steppes away for horses," says team member Oliver Ryder, a geneticist at the San Diego Zoo. The horses won't have to wander far in the Gobi for water and food—years ago their ancestors lived in grassy regions of the desert.

But scientists know little about the group dynamics of Przewalski's horses, what the best male to female or adult to juvenile ratios are, or how much ranging room the horses need. So the UNDP team plans to select a genetically diverse herd from various zoos (more than 1100 horses now live in 30 zoos worldwide) and observe them for several months at an undetermined site in Europe.

Ozone Prediction Hits It Right on the Nose

Weather forecasts may still fall short on accuracy, but aiming a little higher, atmospheric scientists got one prediction right: As forecast in April, the ozone layer over the northern mid-latitudes is thinner than normal this summer.

Recognizing that the debris launched by the June 1991 eruption of Mt. Pinatubo had somehow knocked down mid-latitude ozone levels last winter by 9%, scientists had predicted that this summer's ozone would be low as well (*Science*, 23 April, p. 490). Although exactly how the debris creates this effect is being debated, the effect itself is not: Stratospheric ozone levels in June were down about 10%, says NASA's Richard McPeters, who bases his estimate on data from a satellite-borne ozone-mapping instrument.

Shaving the ozone layer by one-tenth translates to a 13% increase in the ultraviolet radiation that burns skin and over the years can cause cancer. And McPeters has this warning: On any given day, the ozone layer, shaped by high-altitude winds, may vary in thickness from place to place. For example, in late June the central United States had about 20% less ozone overhead than did either coast. In Canada the resulting variations in ultraviolet merit a public warning. But Americans are on their own—the United States has neither an ultraviolet monitoring network like Canada's nor a set system to warn the public.

Rice Researchers Score Once More

July must be "Rice Research Month." First came the news that China plans to map the rice genome (*Science*, 2 July, p. 19). Now the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) in Manila, the Philippines, has landed $2.3 million for a five-country biotechnology network to devise new rice strains.

The network will hand out crop engineering freebies—biotech equipment and assorted genes—to government scientists in China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Thailand. According to John Bennett, the IRRI molecular biologist running the network, the plan is to use the genetic material to develop rice strains resistant to three major diseases: rice blast, tungro virus, and bacterial blight. Funding the network—for its first 3 years, at least—are the German government ($1.4 million) and the Asian Development Bank ($900,000).