RANDOM SAMPLES

edited by CONSTANCE HOLDEN

Wiley Declines to Publish Jensen Book

Last spring, the New York branch of John Wiley & Sons canceled a book on intelligence research, *The G Factor*, on the eve of publication, labeling as "repellent" the views of its author, Christopher Brand of Edinburgh University, on racial differences in IQ (*Science*, 3 May, p. 644). Now, Wiley has evidently decided that controversial psychologist Arthur Jensen's 800-page tome on the same topic—the bulk of which it has had under review for the past 10 months—is too hot to handle. In a letter dated 29 July, the publisher wrote to Jensen that "after careful review and discussion, we have concluded that we are not the right publisher for your book...."

Jensen, an emeritus professor at the University of California, Berkeley, is well known for his research on the *g* or "general intelligence" factor, including its biological underpinnings. Two of the book's 14 chapters discuss race differences in *g*. But Jensen says his editor at Wiley had been very positive about both the book and prospects for a contract once all the chapters were in. Furthermore, he was told the scientific reviews were excellent. Indeed, one of the reviewers, Wesleyan University psychologist Nat Brody, wrote Wiley last November that the book "meets the highest standards of scholarship" and predicted "this book will be the standard reference on the subject for many years."

But then came the Brand affair. After that, says Jensen, he was warned that at Wiley "they were having a lot of conferences about my book at a level these things usually don't get discussed at."

Wiley spokesperson Susan Spilka denies that political worries affected Wiley's decision. "We in no way had made any commitment" to Jensen, she says. "We look at thousands of books, we reject some and accept some—that's the business of publishing."

Designing the Best Possible Meeting

Every veteran meeting goer knows the frustration of discovering that two choice sessions are being held at the same time at opposite ends of the convention center. Organizers try to avoid such conflicts. But the scheduling is largely done "in a hurry... and by intuition" says mathematician Carroll Johnson of the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

Crystallographer Yvon Le Page of the National Research Council of Canada, Ottawa, thinks he has a better way—a mathematical system to take the guesswork out of scheduling. Tested at last summer's American Crystallographic Association meeting in Montreal, the methods could be a boon to organizers of future meetings, says Johnson.

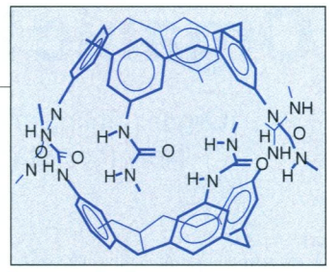
Le Page began work nine months before the meeting, after session topics had been decided, with an email survey asking participants which sessions they wanted to attend. His sample of about 100 revealed a small number of "interest profiles," such as macromolecular crystallography or materials sciences, whose adherents tended to travel together throughout the meeting.

As he relates in the June issue of the *Journal of Applied Crystallography*, Le Page found that calculating the optimum scheduling would have involved an "astronomical number of permutations." He therefore resorted to an approach known as dual problem theory, which describes how to take one solution to a problem and find its "dual," which has the opposite effect. The easiest starting point, he found, was a meeting scenario that would maximize conflicts for the attendees. "It is quite straightforward to frustrate massively the participants" because there are many possible bad scenarios, explains Le Page. He then switched the parameters to achieve the dual solution. The result was "a pretty good meeting" and a narrowed range of possibilities amenable to tinkering. From these Le Page says he came up with a "very good" meeting that featured five parallel sessions scheduled in seven half-day chunks for the 1100 participants.

At least one attendee attests that Le Page's efforts were worthwhile: University of Chicago crystallographer Zhong Ren says he "didn't notice any conflicts and was able to go to all the sessions" he wanted to.

SMITHSONIAN INST./MOTOROLA FOUNDATION

Cosmo-thriller. A comet hurtles toward a crash landing on the young Earth in this simulation from the latest dazzling IMAX film, *Cosmic Voyage*, which debuted at the Smithsonian Institution's Air and Space Museum on 9 August. The 35-minute film, shown on a 5-story high screen, was funded in part by the National Science Foundation (NSF) and uses animations created at two NSF supercomputer centers. It includes the longest continuous computer-generated zoom in filmdom: from the edge of the universe to the quarks in the nucleus of an atom in a cell.



Tiny tube. A simplified sketch.

The Littlest Test-tube

A tiny reaction vessel that holds just one molecule at a time has been built by chemists at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The molecular capsule might lead to new catalysts for speeding up reactions or to the creation of new sensors for environmental pollutants.

Julius Rebek and his team report in the July issue of *Angewandte Chemie* that they made this vessel from two vase-shaped calixarene molecules to which they attached molecules of urea. Since urea contains positively charged nitrogen-hydrogen groups and negatively charged oxygen atoms, the hydrogens on one vase form a bond with the oxygens on the other, linking the two vases.

The researchers ascertained the capacity of the new vessel by building a 3D computer model of it and stuffing it with virtual molecules. Rebek says the capsule might be used in place of an enzyme to speed up some reactions that are currently too slow to be of scientific use. The researchers also think it might be used as a sensor or filter because it can only accommodate molecules of a certain shape. Those include benzenes, cubane and cyclohexane—the building blocks of many chemicals important in drugs and agrochemicals.

The team is now looking into whether their capsule can distinguish between different halogen-containing aromatics with an eye to testing its use as a sensor. "This is very elegant chemistry," says calixarene expert David Reinhoudt of Twente University in the Netherlands. "The capsule is just right for small aromatic compounds. . . and might be used to guide reactions that don't normally take place."