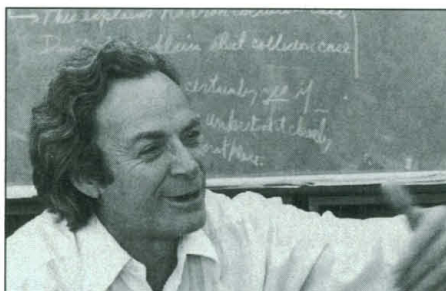


Feynman Kin Sue Caltech

The children of the late physicist Richard Feynman are suing the California Institute of Technology (Caltech) in Pasadena, Vice Provost David Goodstein, and W.W. Norton for publishing a lecture by their father without their permission. They're seeking \$500,000 in damages.

The lecture, Feynman's geometric proof of Kepler's theory on "The Motion of Planets Around the Sun," was published in a 1996 book by David Goodstein, a former protégé of Feynman's, and his wife Judith, Caltech registrar. The talk was given to Feynman's freshman class in 1964.

David Goodstein says the lecture was not included in the three-volume classic, *The Feynman Lectures on Physics*, the first of which appeared in 1963. By the time the tape was discovered in September 1993, he explains, "the



Feynman in 1973.

volume it would have fitted in had already been published," so "everybody just sort of forgot about it." Later, he says, his wife discovered two pages of Feynman's lecture notes containing crucial diagrams which, coupled with the tape, were enough to make Feynman's "simple [but] very beautiful" proof accessible to anyone with high school geometry. "Our idea in writing the book was to show a face of Feynman that people who admired him but weren't familiar with his science could see," says Goodstein.

Feynman's children, Michelle

and Carl, didn't see things that way and filed suit on 27 July. According to their complaint, publication of the lecture violates a March 1993 agreement stating that the family retained the rights to profit from materials that

had been donated to Caltech. Although the unpublished lecture was not a donation, the family argues that it is implicit-

ly covered by the agreement. "It doesn't belong to the Goodsteins or Caltech," says a lawyer for the family, state Senator Quentin Kopp. Kopp adds that he will block any move to submit the dispute to arbitration: "I want Caltech in front of a jury."

Caltech's lawyers aren't talking, but Goodstein says he has been assured that the suit is "absolutely baseless. We were meticulously careful not to use anything that didn't belong to Caltech. I can't understand why they're suing me at all."

Sex and the Single Neutrino

Public scientific literacy may not be up to snuff, but judging from the 17 August *New Yorker*, metaphors in the lay press are right at the cutting edge. To wit: "In terms of scale, the machinery that has been constructed to induce perjury stands in relation

to the perjury it may or may not have induced as one of those enormous and expensive particle accelerators out West stands in relation to the trail of a neutrino."—Hendrik Hertzberg, writing about l'affaire Clinton-Lewinsky.

Explaining the North American Student

In science fields alone, at least one-quarter of the more than 66,000 teaching assistants at U.S. universities come from outside the United States. Hoping to make their experience more effective and enjoyable, Ellen Sarkisian, associate director of Harvard University's Derek Bok Center for Teaching and Learning, has put together a guide called "Teaching American Students." The booklet hits the high points of campus culture—students may dress the same, but they all want to be seen as individuals, for example; or, it doesn't mean they're rude if they don't greet you when you enter the room.

Other hints:

- "When students ask questions, understand that this is not necessarily a challenge to the teacher's authority."

- Don't try to tell jokes. "A joke in one culture may not be funny in another ... nor should you try irony, [which] can be interpreted as sarcasm."

- Eye contact is good. "Your students will look at you most of the time. ... It is not—as in some cultures—a sign of respect to look down."

- "Although it might be considered appropriate in your culture to grade women according to different standards ... here it would be considered very unfair."

- "Students may not seem as interested in their academic work as you might hope. Do not take this personally."

The booklet, which also serves up examples of clear and tactful teacher-student exchanges, can be obtained by e-mailing interculturalpress@internetmci.com

Biological Nirvana on Navassa

It's not Darwin's Galápagos, but this cliff-girded Caribbean island some 60 kilometers west of Haiti is the site of a recent groundbreaking scientific voyage: 650 species have been added to the list of 150 the island was already known to host. Of these, "we're expecting as many as 250 species to be new to science," says ichthyologist Michael Smith, the expedition's leader.

Navassa, an uninhabited forested island covering only 5.2 square kilometers and entirely lacking in fresh water, was used in the last century as a source of guano for fertilizer. Nonetheless, the island and its spectacular coral reefs remain in near-pristine condition. The recent inventory—the first since a Harvard-led foray in the 1930s—is part of the Carib-

bean Biodiversity program of the Center for Marine Conservation in Washington, D.C.

Among species added to the list of Navassa inhabitants



are hundreds of lichens, butterflies, and beetles, says Smith, whose team was deposited on the island by helicopter. He says the New York Botanical Gardens has already confirmed two previously unknown species of lichen.