and to thwart development in Cuba. As a scientist, I would never continue the same failed experiment for 38 years. It is time for our government to change its experimental strategy as well.

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References and Notes

1. The meeting was organized as a continuing medical education course at the University of Illinois, Chicago, through the efforts of Moises Gaviria and was sponsored by several pharmaceutical companies (Jannsen, AstraZeneca, Wyeth-Ayerst, and Solvay), as well as the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur foundation of Chicago.

Responding to *The River*

In the book *The River: A Journey to the Source of HIV and AIDS* (Little, Brown, 1999), author Edward Hooper suggests that we covertly used chimpanzee cells to produce the live oral polio vaccine (OPV) that was used in the first mass campaign with OPV in the former Belgian Congo. Hooper postulated that the cells contained a simian immunodeficiency virus that later mutated to human immunodeficiency virus.

In his review of *The River* (*Science*'s Compass, 12 Nov., p. 1305), Robin Weiss expresses skepticism about the book's basic hypothesis. His skepticism is well founded, because no chimpanzee cells were ever used by us to make OPV. Data bearing on this point are being collected and will be published in a scientific journal. It is thus ironic that the year 2000 will be the 50th anniversary of the first trials in humans of an OPV (*1*), and also the year in which polio will perhaps be eradicated, thanks to the use of mass campaigns of vaccination such as the ones performed in the then Belgian Congo (*2, 3*) and in the then Soviet Union (*4*).

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Tenured Women in Academia

In Andrew Lawler's News Focus article "Tenured women battle to make it less lonely at the top" (12 Nov., p. 1272), the information in the graph of the faculty mix at Harvard University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) (p. 1273) appears to undermine his thesis that senior women scientists are being hired and promoted at these institutions in disproportionately low numbers. The graph indicates that faculty size has been essentially flat at both institutions since 1979. At MIT the decline in male faculty since 1979 appears to be balanced by growth in female faculty. If the decline in male faculty represents most of the positions that became available between 1979 and 1999, then MIT has been hiring mainly women to fill vacancies left mainly by men. At the very least, women have been hired to a greater degree than their proportion in the applicant pool. How can MIT do much more to increase the number of faculty women? The main problem is one of not enough available jobs, and this means, of course, that there are many highly qualified men who will never find satisfactory employment of any form in

academia. Almost any university can provide stories of men who spent decades in lowly paid, unrecognized adjunct positions and then left.

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Response

Neither Harvard nor MIT has been hiring mainly women to its senior faculty science ranks in the past 25 years. The graph that Kilty refers to does not address faculty turnover. And the sudden increase in MIT's hiring of women after 1995 is clear evidence that the issue is not, as Kilty suggests, a simple matter of too few jobs. The increase was due directly to Dean Robert Birgeneau's insistence that there were indeed qualified women who were not being adequately considered. As for Kilty's comment on the plight of highly qualified men, surely there are those who languish in lowly paid, unrecognized adjunct positions; but data and anecdotal evidence suggest that a far higher proportion of women have suffered this fate for decades, mostly in silence.

Andrew Lawler

The accounts of how tenured women at Harvard and MIT feel "lonely at the top" were for me a light turned on. The feelings of unhappiness and isolation that accompany academic success are not restricted to women at leading institutions. Even though the chips may differ from one institution to the next (space, salary, involvement in key decisions, administrative support, teaching assignments, time for research), the result is the same. Senior women generally do not receive as much respect from their chairs and deans as senior men with comparable or fewer accomplishments. Somehow this came as a surprise to me because, as a junior faculty member, I was busy establishing my research program and career. Linda Greenlaw, a swordfish boat captain, said it well in her book *The Hungry Ocean* when she wrote she had been "too damn busy working to worry about what others might think of me" (*1*), when asked about being the only woman in her profession. I felt that setting an example by doing good science was the best way to achieve equality, rather than by forcing the issue through active feminism. It did not work. At least now I have an understanding of why I feel as I do.

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1. Linda Greenlaw, *The Hungry Ocean* (Hyperion, New York, 1999), p. 58.

Whatever Margaret Geller's own concerns may be over the offer of a Mallinckrodt chair at Harvard University ("Margaret Geller: Battling discrimination or bureaucracy?" p. 1277), the donors have good reason also to be miffed. There, a full professorial chair traditionally carries, along with an excellent salary, an almost absolute tenure and the clear implication that, beyond a fractional year of scheduled academic obligations, the distinguished incumbent may be trusted to pursue whatever activities her or his scholarly muse may dictate—all this beholden to no external agency. That the latter attributes of tenure and guaranteed free time are important is witnessed by the apparent fears of jealousy their award might engender. But without these qualities, a named chair becomes only a hollow reflection of some nomenclatural and budgetary manipulations and has no genuine substance; it is a "chair without a seat," so to speak. One may doubt that this was what the donors had in mind in their generous efforts to honor the name of Mallinckrodt: both Geller and Mallinckrodt deserve better.

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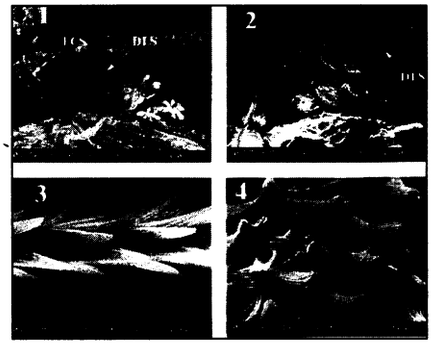
A "Mite" More Information

The NetWatch item "Mad about mites" (5 Nov., p. 1047) is illustrated with an image of a mite of the genus *Tuckerella*. This genus is known for its beautiful ornamental setae. These mites have been called ornate false spider mites in Australia, peacock mites in Central America, or odd plant-feeding mites in the United States (*1*). Contrary to what is mentioned in the NetWatch item, the function and purpose of the setae on *Tuckerella* mites is known—they are part of a special defense system (*2*). The flagellate caudal seta (FCS) [photos 1 and 3 (*3*)] of the peacock mite are built with prominent spines along its entire length. When predators approach, the caudal setae



Scanning electron microscope images of various setae structures on *Tuckerella* mites.

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