

Random Samples:

What Frank Press Really Said

It's pop quiz time. Q. National Academy of Sciences President Frank Press thinks the Super Conducting Supercollider (SSC): (a) is a very high-priority project, (b) is more important than the space station, (c) should be put on hold, or (d) should be given a catchier name.

If you answered "b," go to the head of the class. Press told the NAS annual meeting in April that budget constraints should force scientists to set some priorities before someone else (read "Congress") does it for them (*Science*, 6 May, p. 713). He then did just that, putting the SSC and the human genome programs into a category of large projects that deserve enough money to keep going, but that probably should wait for full funding. He placed AIDS research and superconductivity in a "fund immediately" category, and the space station and other projects in a "political" category that might well wait for the next president.

But by the time the message got to those professional priority-makers on the Hill, it was hard to tell just what Frank Press really *did* say. Witness these excerpts from a spirited

debate on the House floor over an amendment by Representative Jack Buechner (R-MO) to limit fiscal year 1989 money for research and development on the SSC to \$100 million.

Buechner: "Some people have placed it [the SCC] in a higher priority over the space station. Dr. Press, of course, is in the National Science Foundation and is into pure science. . . ."

Representative Paul B. Henry (R-MI): "Let me also remind [Representative Robert S. Walker (R-PA)] that in Dr. Frank Press's comments before the National Academy of Sciences . . . this project in his ranking was above the space station. . . ."

Walker: "There is politics within science, too. Frank Press tends to come down on the side of high energy physics. That is fine. That is his determination of priorities."

Representative James H. Scheuer (D-NY): "Dr. Press, who thinks this is a very high priority item . . ."

Buechner: "It is important at this point that we clarify the Frank Press statement. Frank Press said that this project should be put on hold."

Scheuer: "I met with Frank Press a couple of weeks ago for a whole evening and my impression of our conversation was otherwise."

The amendment failed, but the House and Senate Appropriations committees later each voted a \$100 million cap for SSC funding in 1989.

Stewart Goes *au Naturel*

"Il faut cultiver notre jardin." —Voltaire.

"Pas moi." —Stewart.

Walter Stewart, NIH's self-appointed investigator of research misconduct and fraud, sometimes finds himself embattled by other scientists and by his own bosses. This time, it's his neighbors on the offensive.

Stewart and his wife Nancy, a government lawyer, haven't mowed the lawn of their subur-

ban home in 2 years, and the neighbors in the tony Potomac district of Montgomery County, Maryland, are less than thrilled. As reported in the 16 June *Washington Post*, a year after they moved in, the Stewarts decided to practice what they call meadow gardening—letting their lawn go *au naturel*. They then received an anony-



Oink! "I don't know about you, but I'm getting full."

mous note saying "Please, cut your lawn. It is a disgrace to the entire neighborhood." The Stewarts' five-page rebuttal to the neighborhood apparently didn't calm the critics. Since then the weeds have grown taller and the neighbors' patience shorter.

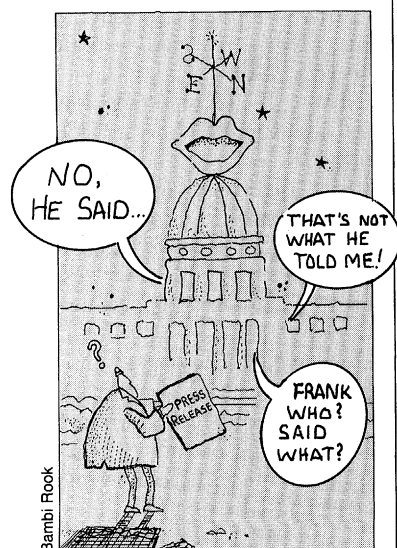
The county says the Stewarts are violating an ordinance requiring any plant over 12 inches tall to be cut. The law exists to prevent health hazards like rodents and snakes and pollen clouds from huge weed patches. The Stewarts say their lawn is less a hazard than the closely cropped, pesticide-laden ones of their neighbors. "As a chemist I'm not opposed to using chemicals when necessary, of course," Walter Stewart said in an interview. "But I think you have to question the environmental impact of large-scale applications of these herbicides on lawns." He and his wife do control the poison ivy and ragweed in the yard, he said.

The county has backed off for the moment. And the Stewarts say they're ready to go to court if necessary to keep the tractor mower in the shed.

Porky's Pig Out

Contrary to popular opinion, pigs don't pig out.

Ordinarily they know when they are full and don't really overeat, according to Jerome C. Pekas, an animal physiologist with the U.S. Meat Animal Research Center.



In May Pekas told the 72nd meeting of the Federation of American Societies for Experimental Biology that a hormone called cholecystokinin (CCK) usually lets porky know when he's hit his limit of slops.

But when CCK is neutralized, pigs eat more and grow faster, Pekas said. He and co-workers Bruce D. Schanbacher and William E. Trout injected 12 pigs with CCK linked to a foreign peptide so that the pigs' immune systems treated the hormone as a foreign invader and developed an immunity to its effects. As a result, the pigs ate an average of 22.5 pounds more feed and gained 11 pounds more over 82 days than did 12 control pigs, who retained their usual dietary sense.

CCK occurs naturally in humans, too. But don't expect your allergist to immunize you so you can beef up or (more likely) give you some unadulterated CCK so you can resist that midnight snack.

"That's way, way, way down the road," Trout said.

In fact, he called it gross speculation.

■ GREGORY BYRNE