Moor-Jankowski, *New Scientist*, and about 50 parties in its home country, Austria, including local chapters of Greenpeace and the World Wildlife Fund. All but Moor-Jankowski settled out of court—"for the obvious reason," according to one court ruling on the case, "that the costs of continuing to defend the action were prohibitive." Moor-Jankowski stayed in the ring for 8 years in New York state and federal courts, where he won favorable decisions, which Immuno repeatedly appealed.

The courts ruled against Immuno, says Moor-Jankowski's lawyer, not only because Immuno failed to prove that any of the statements in question were false, but because the New York constitution grants special free-speech protection to statements of opinion. He says the case will set a precedent, helping to protect others from libel suits over opinion. "Immuno sued to chill public opinion," he says. "You can't have people in big companies sue to shut people up."

Immuno's lawyer counters that the company sued only to vindicate their damaged reputation. He says Moor-Jankowski knew all along that Immuno never planned to release any potentially infectious chimps back into the wild, as the letter in the journal states. The appellate court, he says, "got it wrong" when it ruled that Moor-Jankowski's statements were all true.

Now that it's over, Moor-Jankowski says he expects to have a tough time returning to medical research after an absence of 8 years.

A Nuclear Cure for Nuclear Waste

In a nuclear-age version of fighting fire with fire, a team of researchers mostly at the Los Alamos National Laboratory in New Mexico proposes dulling some of the radioactive bite of wastes from nuclear weapons facilities by blasting the hot trash with neutrons.

The idea—called Accelerator Transmutation of Waste (ATW)—is to extract long-lived radioactive elements such as plutonium and technetium from waste stored in tanks at places like the Hanford Nuclear Reservation in Washington and shower them with neutrons, transforming them into either stable atoms or shorter-lived radioactive ones. An accelerator slamming protons into a heavy metal target would generate the neutrons, which would be slowed and made more effective by a pool of heavy water surrounding the source. The radioactive nuclear waste would be piped through the pool.

The process does not entirely neutralize the radioactivity, says theoretical nuclear physicist Edward D. Arthur, the ATW program manager. "You would still need a repository of some type," he adds. But while non-nuked waste has to be stored for tens of thousands of years in deep and expensive repositories whose reliability is hard to predict, keeping transmuted materials for several centuries in near-surface facilities should suffice, he says.

The ATW technology has roots going back nearly 30 years, but it still exists largely on paper. Earlier this month, though, the Los Alamos group talked up the idea in Orlando and Monterey at two nuclear science meetings. They'll do the same next week in Sweden at a gathering of accelerator-based transmutation specialists. Getting the Los Alamos ATW project up and running will require, among other things, an accelerator that produces a current of protons 100 times more powerful than any existing machine. But that technological challenge might be simpler than the political and environmental challenges posed by any scheme for coping with nuclear waste.

When Do You Send Blue Roses?

Violets are red and roses are blue. It sounds mixed up, but it could soon be true—thanks to genetic engineering. Late in August, DNA Plant Technology Corp. (DNAP), in Cinnaminson, New Jersey, plans to field-test genetically transformed chrysanthemums that sport pure white blossoms. If all goes well, florists may be selling the transgenic mums within two years.

The DNAP researchers got white mums by adding a nonfunctional duplicate of the pigment gene, which suppressed the original gene's expression. Although nonengineered white mums are already on the market, none have the high productivity and disease resistance of the gene-spliced kind.

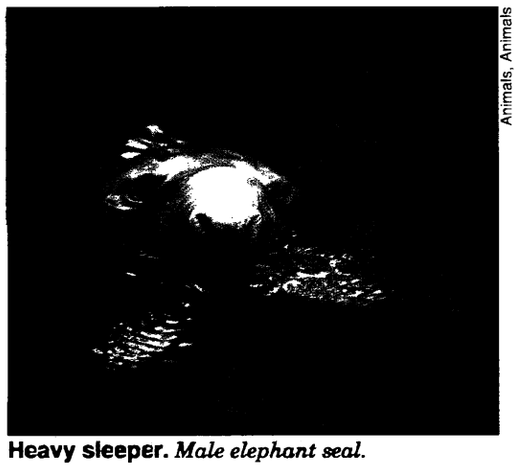
Moreover, gene-splicing promises flower colors never seen in nature. There's every incentive to try, according to DNAP's Neil Courtney-Gutterson. The demand for horticultural oddities is huge—the worldwide market for cut flowers and ornamentals exceeds $4 billion annually.

If DNAP and its partner, the Dutch seed company Zaadunie, B.V. (a subsidiary of the pharmaceutical giant Sandoz) succeed in their quest for blue roses, a lot of flower lore will soon need rewriting.

The SIDS-Seal Connection

The ability of a seal to hold its breath for long periods may offer a clue about why some human babies die suddenly and inexplicably in their cribs.

Seals stop breathing for several minutes at a time, not only when they dive but also while they sleep, says University of Alaska marine biologist Michael Castellini. This so-called sleep apnea is generally good for the seals: it slows their metabolism, enabling them to conserve blubber.



Animals, Animals

Heavy sleeper. *Male elephant seal.*

But in baby seals, breath-holding can cause wild fluctuations in heart rate. It takes about a year before they learn to stabilize their heart during apnea. That's where the connection to human babies comes in: Similar heart-rate fluctuations may play a role in Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS), according to Castellini, who spoke on the SIDS-seal connection at a conference on elephant seals at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

SIDS kills about one in 500 babies under the age of 12 months. Scientists cannot explain why SIDS strikes, but the syndrome is correlated with medical complications of pregnancy and delivery, smoking during pregnancy, and cold weather. Castellini is studying sleep apnea in baby seals and how they learn to control their heart rate in the hopes of finding a cause—and perhaps a cure—for SIDS.

Castellini isn't the only animal researcher to be intrigued by a potential animal parallel. Veterinarians at the University of Pennsylvania are studying a link between SIDS and sleep apnea in bulldogs.