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Information to Contributors appears on pages 36–38 of the 3 January 1992 issue. Editorial correspondence, including requests for permission to reprint and reprint orders, should be sent to 1333 H Street, NW, Washington, DC 20005. **Science Telephone:** 202-326-6500. London office: 071-435-4291. **Subscription/Member Benefits Questions:** 202-326-6417. **Other AAAS Programs:** 202-326-6400.

LETTERS

The Smithsonian and Sheep Hunting

In the Random Samples of 10 April (p. 174), two factual errors appeared in the item "Smithsonian burned by sheep hunt." The first is a statement that Richard Mitchell "was helping Smithsonian researchers stalk Tibetan argali in 1987. . . ." The 1987 trip to the Qinghai plateau was a scientific collecting expedition to obtain specimens of rodents and other small mammals for the National Museum of Natural History. We accompanied Chinese scientists from the Northwest Plateau Institute of Biology. No Tibetan argali were "stalked" by any member of that expedition. The second erroneous statement is that "[o]n another trip, [Mitchell] also helped a group of private hunters kill four argali—which were listed as an endangered species." Mitchell accompanied hunters, at no cost to the Smithsonian and at the invitation of the Chinese Ministry of Forestry, to western Gansu province to conduct biological surveys and assess the area for cooperative research projects by Smithsonian scientists and their Chinese colleagues pursuant to an existing cooperative research agreement. The argali sheep there are not considered endangered by Chinese authorities and are not listed by the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora as such. The hunters had legal permits to shoot the animals. Mitchell did not "help" the hunters, either in arranging the trip, which was organized by a commercial outfitter, or during the hunt itself. He did not accompany the hunters on their hunting forays from the base camp and confined himself to obtaining scientific data from independent observations, including measurements and tissue samples from sheep killed by the hunters.

Robert S. Hoffmann
Assistant Secretary for Science,
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Washington, DC 20560

Response: Hoffmann is right to point out that no Smithsonian researchers stalked argali on the China trips of 1987 and 1988; we regret the error. However, Mitchell—who was on detail to the Smithsonian and reported to Hoffmann—was a member of a party that shot four argali in China in 1988. Mitchell himself has declined to answer *Science's* questions about that hunt; yet Hoffman, who was not present, has provid-

ed some details. While neither Hoffmann's trip (1987) nor Mitchell's (1988) was paid for by the Smithsonian, both were financed in part by a foundation created by Mitchell and funded by big-game hunters. Several federal agencies have been investigating the propriety of this arrangement. Finally, Hoffmann's statement that the hunted argali were not of the endangered type is disputed by the court testimony of several experts in sheep taxonomy (*News & Comment*, 27 Apr. 1990, p. 437)—**Eliot Marshall**

European Science

As leaders of the European Community Consortium responsible for determining the complete sequence of chromosome III from *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*, we would like to place the following facts on record in response to suggestions in the article of 24 April (*Science* in Europe, p. 462) that we have withheld data from the scientific community.

1) A total of 135 kilobases of chromosome III sequence data produced by the European Consortium appeared in articles from the participating laboratories between March 1990 and March 1992 in the journal *Yeast*.

2) All requests from other scientists for the sequence of specific regions of the chromosome have been met.

3) The completion of the chromosome III sequence was announced to the international scientific community at meetings in the United States in the summer of 1991, and the paper was submitted to *Nature* at the end of 1991. The period between the announcement and the submission resulted from the rigorous checks on the data by further sequence analyses and by the restriction enzyme analysis performed by Carol Newlon at the New Jersey Medical School, Newark. We have taken considerable pains to ensure that the data released to the community were of the highest quality.

4) The complete contiguous sequence was deposited in the data library of the European Molecular Biology Laboratory on 10 March 1992 under the accession number X59720. The paper describing the main findings appears in the 7 May 1992 issue of *Nature* (1).

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REFERENCES

1. S. G. Oliver *et al.*, *Nature* 357, 38 (1992).

Response: The views of both critics and supporters of the European Community yeast sequencing program were reported in my article. Some critics spoke angrily of the frustration of hearing about the yeast work at conferences over a period of years without being able to gain access to the full data; others said data had come slowly from the yeast program compared to the *Caenorhabditis elegans* program. Among supporters, a common view was that sequencing was "not a lower form of life" and that scientists had no right to expect sequence data to appear earlier than any other form of data.

Both viewpoints needed to be reported, as no general consensus exists in the scientific community as to the right time to release sequence data. Journals differ in publication policy, and scientists can tell of publicly funded projects being held up by squabbles over when sequences must become available to all. Some scientists would even like data to be available before they have been thoroughly checked. The article did not suggest that the three authors "withheld data"; rather, it reported that a number of scientists (but not all) felt that the data should have been made available faster.—**Alun Anderson**

Alun Anderson, in his article about European molecular biology (*Science in Europe*, 24 Apr., p. 460), cites John Tooze on the European Community's policy on research students as saying that "It's better to have no graduate students than foreign ones." The context implies that this is not the policy of the Medical Research Council (MRC) Laboratory of Molecular Biology at Cambridge. This implication is wrong.

We have always actively encouraged the best students to come here, regardless of their country of origin. Indeed, at present approximately half of our 50 graduate students are from abroad. Of those in this category who gained their Ph.D.'s here in previous years, a significant number have made substantial contributions to research. These include Spyros Artavanis (now at

Yale), Elizabeth Blackburn (University of California, San Francisco), Suzanne Cory (Melbourne), Douglas Melton (Yale), Gerald Rubin (University of California, Berkeley), Paul Sigler (Yale), and Gary Struhl (Columbia).

We will continue to welcome applications from prospective students from any country. The effective stipends of graduate students here are now \$1100 per month, rather than the figure quoted by Anderson.

Andrew A. Travers
Director of Studies,
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Response: The quote from John Tooze was intended to illustrate the effects of the European Community (EC) decision that makes it difficult for research students from one EC country to receive grants in another. It should most certainly not be read as a comment on the policy of the Laboratory of Molecular Biology.—**Alun Anderson**

NIH Leaks

Regarding the 8 May item "FBI drops OSI leak probe" (*Random Samples*, 8 May, p. 741), I would like to correct two errors. First, it is stated that "National Institutes of Health Director Bernadine Healy asked the FBI to probe leaks . . ." In fact, Healy referred the information brought to her attention by a concerned citizen to the Office of the Inspector General of the Department of Health and Human Services. The Inspector General, on the basis of the information, contacted the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI).

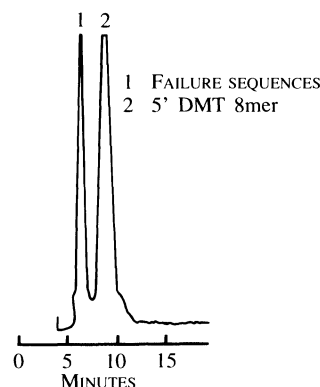
Second, Healy did not ask the FBI to investigate leaks, nor did the U.S. Attorney's Office state in a letter that she was concerned about leaks; in fact, the letter commended Healy for taking appropriate action as head of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). The U.S. Attorney Richard Bennett, in his 20 April letter, states, "You acted with the best interests of the NIH at heart."

Johanna Schneider
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Fear of Butterflies

As a lepidopterist and a pedant, I was wounded by seeing the ineptly formed neologism "lepidophobia" in your pages (*Random Samples*, "New words from the wise," 1 May, p. 611). As formed, it means not "fear of butterflies" (as reported), but "fear

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