China Honors Expat

Wu in lab at Columbia.

A three-story museum in memory of Chinese-American physicist Chien-Shiung Wu—the first of its kind in China for an expatriate scientist—opened last month at Southeast University in Nanjing.

Wu, who died in 1997 at age 85, came to the United States in 1936, winning her doctorate at the University of California, Berkeley. She was a professor at Columbia University for 36 years. She is best known for a 1956 experiment in which she disproved the conservation of parity in nuclear beta decay, a law bearing on the nature of elementary particles. The experiment confirmed a theory proposed by her colleague T. D. Lee and Chen Ning Yang of Princeton, who both went on to win the Nobel Prize in physics in 1957.

Wu became the first woman to head the American Physical Society in 1973. In her later years she applied biophysics to the study of sickle cell anemia. The museum contains items donated by her husband, Luke C. L. Yuan, and models of her lab equipment.

The Evanescence of Vents

Plans to celebrate the 25th anniversary of the discovery of hydrothermal vents with a triumphant return to one of the most dramatic Galápagos vent communities hit a snag at the end of May when scientists couldn't find it.

The vents are fissures that supply nutrient-loaded hot water supporting oases of tubeworms, mussels, and crabs in the vast desert of the ocean bottom. Biologists discovered the so-called Rose Garden vent, which covered about 2500 square meters, in 1979. They revisited the site throughout the '80s to track the waves of different colonizers.

But the Rose Garden hadn't been visited since 1990, and after several sweeps in the submersible *Alvin*, the researchers, led by biologist Timothy Shank of Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution in Massachusetts and geologist Stephen Hammond of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration laboratory in Newport, Oregon, realized that the Rose Garden was no more. The likely explanation: It was paved over by a lava flow from the vent.

Rose Garden vent is now history.

Chemical oceanographer Marvin Lilley of the University of Washington, Seattle, says such is the way with vents: "You never know what to expect when you go back." But although the Rose Garden is gone, a new one—dubbed "Rosebud"—has recently bubbled up. That will give biologists another chance to study the growth of a vent community from its earliest stages, says Lilley.

Measuring Equine-imity

Researchers in the U.K. claim that a scale used to measure the human personality works on horses, too.

Daydreamer?

Past studies of equine temperament have not used rigorously defined traits, according to psychologist Paul Morris and colleagues at the University of Portsmouth. So the researchers wanted to see if horses could be assessed using a classic human personality inventory based on the so-called "Big Five" characteristics: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.

The subjects were 10 senior horses at a naval riding center. The nine judges were staff members at the center, and all knew all the horses well. The judges were asked to rate each horse, on a scale of 1 to 32, on a cluster of traits in each of the Big Five categories. Many of the items in each cluster are very human-sounding—such as "optimist," "daydreamer," "likes poetry," "can get into arguments," and "keeps a neat and clean stable." So judges relied on subjective impressions to decide whether each horse's personality fit the descriptors.

As it turned out, the judges agreed with one another on each horse just about as often as humans do in rating another human, the researchers report in the 5 July issue of *Personality and Individual Differences*.

Animal personality expert Sam Gosling of the University of Texas, Austin, says the study bolsters evidence that these judgments reflect "real attributes" rather than "anthropomorphic projections." Such research, he notes, can have practical applications for people dealing with animals, ranging from zookeepers to trainers of bomb-sniffing dogs.

Accounts Rendered?

The venerable *Comptes Rendus*, France's premier research journals, have been undergoing a successful shakeup. Faced in the '90s with a seriously flagging set of journals, the French Academy of Sciences decided to bite the bullet and publish mainly in English. Last week the academy held a press conference to report that this and other changes in the past few years—including adding reviewers and shortening review time—have helped boost the fortunes of its seven journals.

The shift to English began after 1994 when biologist Jean Rosa made that a condition for his acceptance of academy membership. Now, the majority of articles in all the journals are in English, and only abstracts—instead of synopses—are in French.

The switch to English "made many people sad," said Jacques Dercourt, publications co-director and a geology professor at the Pierre and Marie Curie University in Paris. But there have been no complaints, and results are striking. Submissions to the chemistry and physics journals, for example, have rebounded after almost completely drying up 5 years ago. The physics journal, almost entirely in English, although still in the red, is publishing about 120 articles a year, Dercourt reported. And the total number of foreign authors for all subjects has increased to 1300 from 500 5 years ago.