

A BROKEN PROMISE. Lawrence Summers's resignation as president of Harvard University earlier this year (*Science*, 24 February, p. 1085), has had some expensive fallout. Last week, Larry Ellison, the billionaire co-founder of software giant Oracle Corp., cited Summers's departure as the reason he has decided not to donate \$115 million to Harvard for an institute on global health. Ellison (right) had announced the donation amid much media fanfare last spring.

"It was really Larry Summers's brainchild, and once it looked like Larry Summers was leaving, Larry Ellison reconsidered," Bob Wynne, a spokesperson for Oracle, told the Associated Press. The institute planned to investigate the effectiveness of health policies. It would have been the single largest donation to Harvard ever. Ellison intends to make a comparable donation to another institution, Wynne said.

"We're disappointed with Mr. Ellison's decision to withdraw funding," says Harvard spokesperson Sarah Friedell. Although she would not comment on the plans for the institute, she did confirm that three managers who had been hired in anticipation of Ellison's gift have been laid off.



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UNFORESEEN GLORY. Biologists Victor Meyer-Rochow (left) and József Gál (right) became mini-celebrities after they won an IgNobel Prize for their 2003 paper in *Polar Biology* on the forces involved in penguin defecation. But not everyone was snickering.

In the June issue of *Polar Biology*, Meyer-Rochow and Gal recount several serious queries about their work. An African engineer wrote to ask whether their calculations could be used to protect power lines damaged by defecating vultures. Zookeepers solicited help in calculating the "safe distance" between bird enclosures and visitors. (A meter is plenty for penguins, Meyer-Rochow says, but high-perching raptors demand a wider berth.)

"I had no idea that their Ig had led to this many good adventures," says Marc Abrahams, founder of the IgNobels. Noting that his goal is to make people laugh and then think, Abrahams says stories he's heard from other winners suggest that the prize "has opened something akin to doors."

MOVERS

JUMPING SHIP. Jeffery Taubenberger, the pathologist who made his name resurrecting the 1918 pandemic influenza virus from tissue samples and a frozen corpse in Alaska, left the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology (AFIP) in Washington, D.C., last week to join the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases in Bethesda, Maryland, where he will lead a new research program on flu pathology and evolution. Taubenberger says he's "very excited" about the chance to study viruses at a high-level biosafety lab in "Building 33," a new biodefense center on the National Institutes of Health campus.

His move is a blow to AFIP's already dispirited staff. The Pentagon is still mulling how to carry out a commission's recommendation last year to "disestablish" AFIP while maintaining its renowned 3-million-case tissue repository (*Science*, 2 September 2005, p. 1472). At least two other department heads have left in the past year.

"Everyone's bailing," says one staff scientist. "It's a death spiral."



HOMeward BOUND. The Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST) in Daejeon has tapped another U.S. academic

researcher to lead the school. But this time he's a Korean-born scientist.

Nam Pyo Suh, a professor of mechanical engineering at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Cambridge, will replace former Stanford physicist Robert Laughlin when Laughlin's 2-year contract ends on 14 July. KAIST officials played up Laughlin's outsider status when they hired the 1998 physics Nobelist. But the KAIST board decided not to renew Laughlin's contract after fierce protests from faculty members over his management style and proposed reforms (*Science*, 7 April, p. 32). Laughlin, 56, is returning to Stanford.

The 70-year-old Suh, who has been at MIT for 36 years, says he plans to talk with faculty members and students about the school's direction before proposing any changes. Yong-deok Bae, head of the school's labor union, says that's a good idea. "The troubles with Laughlin were also caused because he didn't understand Korean culture, which is something we hope Suh pays attention to," says Bae.



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