

It's Elementary!

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One of our readers sent us a copy of a news item that some of you might have overlooked in your own newspapers.

April 1, 1988: The heaviest element known to science was recently discovered by physicists at Turgid University. The element, tentatively named Administratium (Ad), has no protons or electrons, which means that its atomic number is 0. However, it does have 1 neutron, 125 assistants to the neutron, 75 vice-neutrons, and 111 assistants to the vice-neutrons. This gives it an atomic mass number of 312. The 312 particles are held together in the nucleus by a force that involves the continuous exchange of meson-like particles called memoons.

Since it has no electrons, Administratium is inert. However, it can be detected chemically because it seems to impede every reaction in which it is present. According to Dr. M. Languor, one of the discoverers of the element, a very small amount of Administratium made one reaction that normally takes less than a second take over four days.

Administratium has a half-life of approximately 3 years, at which time it does not actually decay. Instead, it undergoes a reorganization in which assistants to the neutron, vice-neutrons, and assistants to the vice-neutrons exchange places. Some studies have indicated that the atomic mass number actually increases after each reorganization.

Administratium was discovered by accident when Dr. Languor angrily resigned from the chairmanship of the

physics department and dumped all of his papers into the intake hatch of the university's particle accelerator. "Apparently, the interaction of all of those reports, grant forms, etc. with the particles in the accelerator created the new element," Dr. Languor explained.

Research at other laboratories seems to indicate that Administratium might occur naturally in the atmosphere. According to one scientist, Administratium is most likely to be found on college and university campuses, near the best-appointed and best-maintained buildings. □