Required for next week: January 30, 1996

- "Factors affecting runners' marathon performace", J.F. Buoncristiani and D.E. Martin *Chance* **6**(4), 24–30. Come prepared to discuss this article and ask questions about the parts you didn't understand.

- As we will see, in *Tainted Truth*, Cynthia Crossen quotes the former head of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Products: "In markets where product claims are viewed with utter suspicion, high price is adopted as an indication of quality". I propose we conduct a *chocolate chip cookie* experiment to see if price is a reliable indicator of quality. Before next week, give some thought as to how this experiment should be carried out.

In The Globe and Mail recently

- "Drug combination slows ovarian cancer", Jan 4, A1&A9. A study reported in this week's *New England Journal of Medicine* annouces that using the drug paclitaxel in combination with cisplatin can increase the life expectancy of a woman with advanced ovarian cancer by more than a year. "We are talking about a 50-percent increase in survival. The last time we got this type of breakthrough in treatment was 20 years ago..." said Dr. Allen Covens, head of gynecologic oncology at the Sunnybrook Regional Cancer Centre in Toronto.

- "Scientists find way to mobilize cells against cancer", Dec. 30, A6. A preliminary study reported in the journal *Nature Medicine* suggest a new treatment to control some types of cancer by priming the patient's own immune system with a custom-made vaccine. Four patients were given the vaccine; all of them generated a strong immune response. One patient's cancer disappeared and is still inactive more than two years later. The researchers plan to continue the study: "the study already has a large group of potential volunteers, so new patients are not being recruited".

- "Trait of extroverts traced to gene", Jan. 2, A1&A6. Two studies reported in the latest issue of *Nature Genetics* suggest that novelty seekers have a particular variant of a gene that allows the brain to respond to dopamine. Scientists say the dopamine receptor accounts for perhaps 10 per cent of the difference in novelty-seeking behaviour between one person and the next.

- "Salmon fishery facing crisis", Jan. 16, A4. A report commissioned by the B.C. forest industry warns that overfishing is threatening the survival of the west coast salmon fishery. The Department of Fisheries and Oceans' formal announcement on the state of the salmon fishery is due out this week.

- "Anticholesterol drugs risky for some", Jan. 3, A6. An article in this week's issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association* suggests that long term use of anti-cholesterol drugs could cause cancer, although an editorial in the journal disagrees. One of these drugs is our friend Pravastatin that got the full page ad on November 18 (see handout for November 28).

- "Universities ponder stalled enrollment", Jan. 9, A8. "After two decades of steady growth, the rise in full-time university enrolment ground to a halt last year, Statistics Canada reported yesterday." However, the data given just shows the years 1994 and 1995; enrollment is down 0.1% across Canada, but the variation from province to province is substantial (down 2.5% in Quebec and Newfoundland; up 5.1% in Alberta).

- "New military boss on hot seat", Dec. 26, A1&A4. Article discusses the difficulty for the new chief of defence staff in light of substantial budget cuts that have taken place since the end of the Cold War. Includes a very effective graphic.

- "Scientists find dishcloths dangerous", Dec. 28, A1&A2. I'd like to come back to this one after we've read *Tainted Truth*. A study reported in this month's *Family Practice* found that dishcloths and sponges collected from homes were infected with a variety of illness causing bacteria. The author of the study recommends using paper towels when preparing foods.

- "Black imprisonment trends 'shocking', says racism report", Jan. 16, A1&A7. A report of the Commission on Systemic Racism in the Ontario Criminal Justice System indicates that blacks are substantially over-represented in Ontario jails, and that the disparity has skyrocketed during the past six years. This article generated several letters and editorials.

- "One in seven young Canadians smokes regularly, Statscan finds", Jan. 16, A8.

- "Dieting beats exercise for men, study says", Dec. 27, A11.