

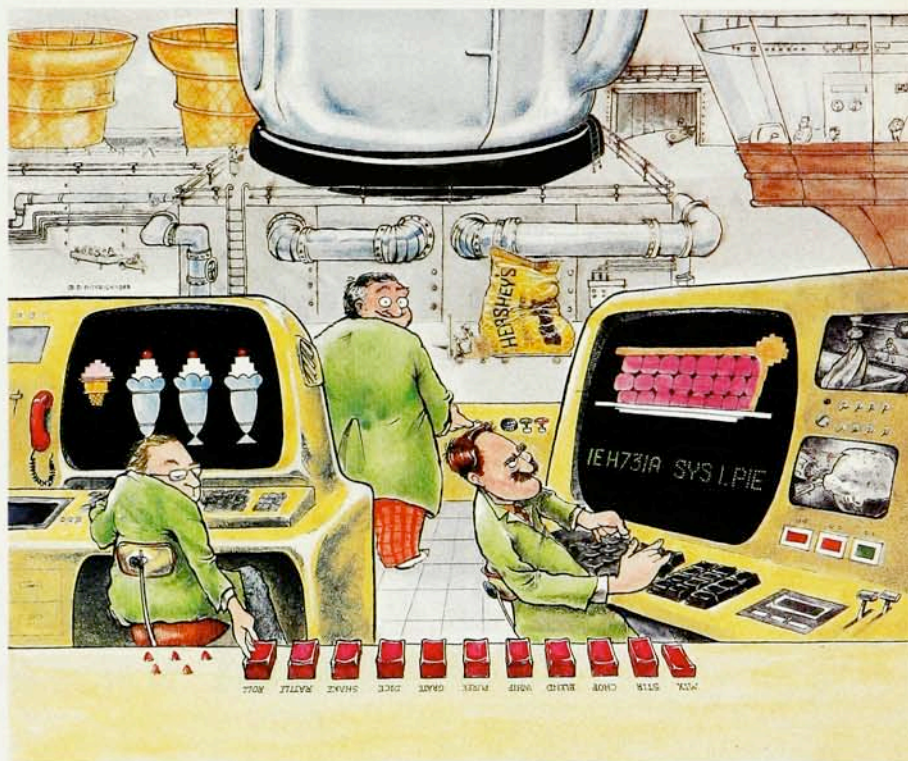
Onward to the Dessertron

Gary Taubes

The machine will be the most ambitious scientific instrument ever: a colossal doughnut-shaped accelerator so immense that all the jelly and cream in the world could not fill it. Dubbed the "Dessertron," it will create twin beams of ice cream—one vanilla, one chocolate—and smash them together at energies of 40 trillion sprinkles (40 jimmies), 1000 times more powerful than any ice cream smasher ever made. Because matter and energy are equivalent in desserts—eternally linked by Einstein's famous equation, $(\text{extra weight}) = (\text{mass}) \times (\text{speed of consumption})^2$ —when these beams collide they will do more than make soft yogurt. Theorists believe that scattered among the debris of the collisions will be elementary flavors and new desserts hundreds of times more fattening than any now known.

"Every time we have increased energy by a factor of 1000," says high-calorie fizicist Sherbet Glacé of Harvard (who won the 1979 Nobel prize for proving that at temperatures above 10^{28} jimmies, strawberry rhubarb and French vanilla are both aspects of the same fundamental God-like flavor), "we have discovered something new. At one sprinkle, we discovered the banana. At a thousand, we figured out that frappes, westerns, malteds and milkshakes were simply different variations of ice cream and milk. At a million, we discovered fudge and made brownies... and were content. The next big step was another factor of 1000, and quantum crust theories were invented as well as the Little Jack Hoerner uncertainty principle. It's clear that what we need to do is study desserts at several trillion sprinkles."

In July, the High Calorie Dessert Advisory Panel of the Food and Drug Administration recommended that the number-one priority in research for the next two decades should be the ice-cream accelerator officially named the Superconducting Super Osterizer



(SSO). The mammoth blender, as they have proposed it, would be as much as 120 miles in diameter with several different speeds from puree all the way through whip. It would take twelve years to build and cost \$2.2 billion, but it would also chop, dice, slice and make moist icing. Among the desserts that scientists hope the machine will find are the raspberry quark, the Higgs Sundae (which may be responsible for defining the calorific content of all fundamental desserts during spontaneous symmetry breakfasting), those desserts predicted by the theory techniflavor—which postulates that the Higgs Sundae is not a fundamental dessert but is actually a bound state of more elementary desserts—and the particles of sugarsymmetry, which include spumpkin and specan pies, banino splits and banino cream pies and sever-

al different flavors of antipastries.

Ever since the SSO was proposed in July, it has become the hottest plum in science. Brighams, Carvel, Baskin-Robbins, Friendlies, LuCERne and Sealtest have already put in bids for the machine, and many more are expected. The state of Texas has promised that if the machine is built in Texas, it will pay for the tunnels and the refrigeration equipment needed to cool the ice cream down to a few degrees above absolute zero to save money on artificial preservatives. When the SSO is finished, it will assure US preeminence in desserts well into the 21st century, and, says Carob Rumraisin, the famous Italian fizicist and discover of intermediate vector bonbons and low-calorie cannoli, "Once this machine is built, American scientists will finally get their just desserts." □

Gary Taubes is staff writer with *Discover* in New York City.