PLANNING GROUPS PRAISED FOR OUTSTANDING JOB

Members of the operating committees responsible for planning last week's two-day program in connection with the Clinical Center cornerstone ceremonies, Open House, and Dyer Lectureship were praised by Dr. William H. Sebrell, Jr., Director of NIH, for their contributions in bringing before the public the accomplishments of NIH and the significance of the Clinical Center's future role in furthering medical research.

"Weeks before the events came off," Dr. Sebrell declared, "committees were hard at work with the countless details involved in planning the programs, making the physical arrangements, and publicizing the events."

"It was a huge and complex undertaking. It could never have been carried out without the wholehearted cooperation of staff members willing to make a considerable sacrifice of time and effort. Those of us who have been close to this work know how thorough and painstaking have been the labors of the various committees. As Director of NIH, I want to extend my thanks to all members for a job well done."

Twenty-four committees participated in the planning of the two-day program. The three major operating groups were the Cornerstone Ceremony committee, headed by Mr. Charles Kidd; the Open House committee, of which Dr. J. R. Heller was chairman; and the Dyer Lectureship committee, in charge of Dr. Norman Topping.

Directing the activities of all the groups was a coordinating committee headed by Dr. David Price.

RESEARCH CHIEF

Dr. Seymour S. Kety has assumed his duties as Scientific Director for the joint research program of NIH and the new Neurological Diseases and Blindness Institute. His appointment was announced earlier this month. Dr. Kety was formerly professor of clinical physiology at the University of Pennsylvania.

The work of the Publicity and Publications committee, chaired by Mr. Judson Hardy, was divided into seven subgroups. Radio and television coverage was handled by a committee headed by Marvin Beers; Press and Magazines, Sam Botsford; Photography, Leon Martin; Production and Distribution, James Culhane; Programs and Publications, Harold Tager; Reception, Rhobia Taylor; and Washington Area Promotion, Jack Beecher.

The Invitations and Announcements committee was directed by Dr. C. J. Van Slyke.

Grouped under the Physical Arrangements committee, headed by Mr. Clarence May, were nine subcommittees. These included: Transportation, George Van Staden; Traffic Control and Parking.

NEW WORK RATING SYSTEM AT NIH IN OPERATION

NIH this month began the big job of drafting the first work performance ratings for employees under the 1950 Act of Congress that abolished the old efficiency rating system. As required by the Act, FSA has developed a Performance Rating Plan for all its civil service personnel.

The new system provides for only three ratings -- Satisfactory, Outstanding, and Unsatisfactory.

By far the greatest number of employees, whose work meets or even exceeds their job requirements, will receive the Satisfactory rating. Most of those who were rated Excellent under the old system can expect to be rated Satisfactory under the new plan.

The rating of Outstanding will be a premium rating, in no way comparable to the old Excellent. It will be assigned only when an employee's performance is so distinguished in all respects as to warrant special commendation. Reviewing officers can only recommend this rating, which is then reviewed by an NIH board and must be approved by the Director of NIH. All employees who receive the Outstanding rating will be considered for a superior accomplishment salary increase.

The Unsatisfactory rating will be assigned to those few employees whose work is so poor that they should not continue in the same job. A 90-day advance written warning will be given to employees in this category. Until this period has elapsed, a formal rating of Unsatisfactory will not be assigned.

An employee with an Unsatisfactory rating may request a review both within FSA and later by the Civil Service Commission.
Dental services cost the American people about a billion dollars a year. Much of this sum is spent on services concerned with tooth decay. But there are other oral diseases on which Americans spend many millions -- periodontal disorders, which involve the soft tissues of the mouth. We find such infections as gingivitis, pyorrhea, and the ulcerating type of gingivitis known as trench mouth.

To investigate periodontal disease, the American Dental Association established a fellowship at NIH ten years ago. It was awarded to Dr. Edward G. Hampp, who is continuing his studies today at NIDR, with the assistance of Dr. Robert Omata and Mr. Albert O. Kroll.

One of Dr. Hampp's major accomplishments was the development of simplified methods for isolation and pure cultivation of the oral spirochetal organisms that are believed to cause Vincent's infection -- an inflammation of the mouth and gums. This made it possible to learn more about the structure of these organisms and to isolate other strains.

After pure cultures of oral spirochetes failed to produce infection in laboratory animals, Dr. Hampp's unit developed serologic tests in an attempt to link the spirochetes to Vincent's infection. This required new techniques and media. A liquid medium was devised to mass cultivate spirochetes for animal intravenous inoculation and to prepare antigens for serologic tests.

Rabbits were then immunized with various strains of oral spirochetes, and the organisms were tested against their homologous immune serums as well as cross-agglutinated. The results indicated that these organisms are highly antigenic.

Investigations of the oral spirochetes have renewed interest in the hypothesis that spirochetal granules may be a germinative unit in the life cycle of spirochetal organisms in general. Cultural studies and dark field and electron microscopy have demonstrated that these granules are a definite phase in the life cycle of such organisms. More recently, this work has led to the development of freeze-drying techniques for preservation of viability and pathogenicity of the virulent Nichols rabbit strain of Treponema pallidum, causative agent of syphilis.

For his original contributions to the knowledge of oral diseases, Dr. Hampp received the 1949 award of the Washington Academy of Science -- the first dentist to be so honored. He was the third scientist from NIH to receive the award in the biologic sciences.

Here and There

Fund Drive

NIH employees have contributed $87.50 to the YMCA campaign for funds to build a recreation facility for boys in Bethesda.

Honors

Dr. Cornelius B. Philip, Assistant Director of NMI's Rocky Mountain Laboratory, was awarded an honorary Doctor of Science degree this month by the University of Nebraska.

A PHS hospital worker has been named "Psychiatric Aide of the Year" by the National Association for Mental Health. He is Hubert Gunnels, senior aide in the shock therapy unit of the Fort Worth, Tex., hospital.

Trips and Talks

Dr. Robert H. Felix, Director of NIMH, discussed the role of research in mental health programs in a recent speech at the Worcester Foundation for Experimental Biology, Shrewsbury, Mass.

Landscaping Section

Mr. Harry J. McGahren, former NIH employee, has rejoined the Buildings Management staff as head of the Landscaping-Gardening Section.

Exhibit Report

A total of 1,394 persons, including 563 outsiders, attended the laboratory manufacturer's exhibit held last month at NIH, Purchase and Supply Branch reports.

Liability Insurance

NIH employees are reminded there is no blanket liability policy covering them when they drive Government vehicles. They are urged to procure this insurance for protection against claims or suits in the event the Government does not recognize responsibility for an alleged negligent act or omission of the operator.

Drivers who already carry liability insurance on their private cars may obtain a rider to their policy, covering them while driving Government cars. Those who do not own a car may obtain a special policy to cover them while driving Government cars.
VETERAN NIH EMPLOYEE RETIRES ON JUNE 30

The National Institutes of Health is losing its Administrative Officer in the Office of the Director. On June 30, Miss Edith Esgate will retire after 33 years of Government service -- all of them in the employ of the Public Health Service.

For the officials under whom she has served, Miss Esgate has been an invaluable aide. Few in the Public Health Service possess a more extensive background in administration. Over some three decades, officials have depended on her for the judgment and intimate knowledge that only long experience can produce.

Commenting on her retirement, Dr. William H. Sebrell, Jr., Director of NIH, summed up the feelings of many who count themselves her friends and associates.

"Those of us who have served with Miss Esgate for many years know well the extent of her contribution to the Public Health Service and the National Institutes of Health. We are all indebted to her. She leaves NIH with the good wishes of her many old and new friends."

Miss Esgate joined the Public Health Service in 1918, starting out as an editorial clerk in the Scientific Research Division. PHS was then a bureau under the Treasury Department. Its Washington offices were located in the old Butler Building, site of the present House Annex on Capitol Hill.

In 1920, Miss Esgate became Administrative Assistant in the Scientific Research Division, which was in charge of the old Hygienic Laboratory, predecessor of NIH.

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N I H Spotlight

Familiar to all staff members who take their assorted health problems to Room 303 in Bldg. 1, trim, photogenic Evelyn Burton mans a busy desk as receptionist in the Employee Health Service. For many a new employee, her desk has been the first port of call in the process of pre-employment physical exams. And for those who hunt out the health unit on other line-of-duty occasions, Evelyn is the first to greet them.

Few, if any, staffers at NIH travel farther to reach their jobs, Evelyn lives in Martinsburg, W. Va., makes the 130-mile round trip by train, an hour and ten minutes each way. In her three years at NIH, she has covered close to 100,000 commuter miles, the equivalent of four times around the earth at the equator.

In common with other units at NIH, the Health Service receives a good many odd requests for information, many of which are handled by Evelyn. An employee once queried the health unit for information on the use of sulfa drugs for a sick calf. (The inquiry was referred to the Laboratory Aids Branch.) An outsider once phoned the health unit to report the discovery of certain roots in the forest that had cured her asthma. She wanted to find out where she could latch on to a patent to protect her discovery. Another person called up to inquire whether cabbage juice was really good for ulcers (her husband's), and if so, where could she buy the stuff.

Born and schooled at Martinsburg, Evelyn served as a telephone operator during the war years, both in her home town and in Miami, Fla. She spent a year at the Bethesda Naval Hospital, where she worked in the Officers Records Department. She left in 1945 to return to Martinsburg. Three years later she joined the staff at NIH.

What with commuting 130 miles a day, Evelyn doesn't find much time to devote to outside interests. She leaves home each day at six forty-five, doesn't get back at night until after seven.

EMERGENCY BRIGADE

To strengthen the guard force in responding to fire alarm calls during the work week, five Buildings Management employees have been picked to form the NIH Emergency Brigade. They are Gerald L. Duvall, Sidney W. Brake, Charles W. Nicol, William M. Cissel, and George H. Cavey. The group recently completed training courses in first aid, fire fighting, and rescue technique.

Smiths Win Handily in Phone Book Sweepstakes

Looking for someone named Smith? You'll find him in the new NIH phone directory -- along with 20 other Smiths -- so make sure you have the first name straight. And you'll need a middle initial with the two who answer to the name of William.

Not quite so numerous but still easy to confuse are the Joneses and Davises: 14 apiece. The Whites are right up there, too, with a count of 13.

The Browns are hardly in the running -- a mere half dozen of them at NIH. Outnumbering them by a comfortable margin are the 11 Johnsons, as well as the Halls, Taylors, Williamses, and Wrights, tied at 10 apiece.

The Duvals made a strong showing, finishing in a dead heat with the Andersons. You'll find 9 of each in the directory. Only a nose behind are the Murphys and Jacks, 8 apiece.

The Washingtons add up to 7; ditto the Millers, Moors, and Thompsons. In a class by themselves are the 36 whose names begin with Mc. They run the gamut from McBeth to McVicker.

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MAIL ROOM'S BIG JOB AT NIH IS GROWING

A recent increase in the number of buildings served by NIH's Mail and Files Section in Bldg. 1 has placed a heavier burden on its messenger service. In addition to the various buildings on the reservation, messengers also deliver to the Professional and Miller buildings in Bethesda, as well as the Warwick Clinic and George Washington Hospital downtown, where NIH personnel are stationed.

Supervisor of the Mail and Files Section is Mr. Lovance L. Stewart, whose staff includes eight messengers, two mail clerks, a clerk-typist, two chauffeurs who operate the station wagons, and a lab technician who operates the mail truck. This truck makes two trips daily at 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m., frequently to pick up and deliver lab specimens at various hospitals. The truck carries books on interlibrary loan for the NIH Library; it also carries animals on occasion to various laboratories and clinics. Every Tuesday the truck picks up a load of baby chicks at Laurel.

An estimated one million pieces of mail are handled each year by the mail room. Most of the mail is addressed to individuals and must be handled separately.

The mail room has two direct wires for telegrams -- one to Western Union and the other to the Public Buildings office -- both downtown. The telegrams are sent out and received by teletype. Frequently, telegrams to be sent out from NIH are delivered to the mail room after 4:30 p.m., creating overtime work for the teletype operator.

New postal regulations governing registered mail have created more work for the messenger service. All registered mail must be delivered to the hands of the addressee wherever possible. If the latter is not available, the messenger must take the registered mail to the Director's office to be opened for security classification. About 20 pieces of registered mail are received each day. One messenger has been cleared to carry security mail. This messenger must pick up and deliver all registered mail at the post office and sign for it.

Irishman Routes Snake Reconnoitering Bldg. 6

Like Saint Patrick, who fearlessly drove the serpents out of Ireland, NCI's Vernon Riley is no man to yield ground to a snake.

On a recent Saturday night, he met up with a five-foot black fellow slithering through the foyer of Bldg. 6 -- no doubt preparing to case the joint in search of a tasty mouse or two.

With fine Irish instinct, Biologist Riley promptly sent the marauder packing. The snake, sensing the futility of trying to outsmart a true son of Eire, offered no resistance.

A few days earlier, another snake skirmish -- the Battle of the Bulge -- took place on the north parking lot at NIH, where an unidentified lab worker, surrounded by a knot of lunch-hour onlookers, was seen casually dangling a black snake that had raided a bird's nest. The captive crawler was pressured into regurgitating his meal, which consisted of three young robins.

Monday and Friday are the peak days for mail, averaging around 25 bags. On other days, the mail room handles between 10 and 15 bags.

A record is kept by the mail room of all lab specimens handled, each of which is opened and routed to the proper laboratory. Often, these specimens are perishable and must be delivered promptly. Some of the labs must wait on these deliveries before starting their day's work -- for example, biologists for testing by Dr. Workman's staff at NML, or autopsy tissue for Dr. Lillie's staff at NIAMD.

The section also maintains a comprehensive file system. Files are kept on all telegrams, registered mail, and lab specimens. And files are kept on mail for the NIH stations off the reservation, such as the Rocky Mountain and Memphis Laboratories.

The section would like to emphasize one point. If employees concerned would get all telegrams and bulk mails to the mail room as early as possible in the afternoon, the section could give more prompt and efficient service.

CORNERSTONE CONTENTS INCLUDE VARIED ITEMS

Items placed in the Clinical Center cornerstone at last week's ceremonies included representative documents and photographs, and symbols of advances in clinical medicine today.

The documents, microfilmed and preserved, covered such items as a list of all NIH employees, Senate and House hearings on the Clinical Center, and copies of the speeches delivered at the cornerstone ceremonies.

The photographs included six of the Clinical Center in various stages of construction, and six of earlier PHS research facilities.

In the category of clinical medicine were such selections as cortisone, penicillin, and blood plasma to represent therapeutic treatment; a radioactive isotope and photofluorographic X-rays to represent diagnostic aids; and vaccines and sera representing preventive measures.

LIBRARY GETS BACK FILES OF JOURNALS

To build up its collections of research journals for use by scientists and their staffs, the NIH Library has recently acquired substantial back files -- and in some cases complete runs -- of publications in various fields. They include the following:


Other back files are on order, Librarian Scott Adams reports, and will be received during the summer. Journal titles that are new to the Library are reported monthly in "Recent Additions to the Library," available to all NIH personnel on request.

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