NEW APPOINTMENT PROGRAM WILL BE EFFECTIVE JAN. 23

Effective January 23, recruitment of employees for the competitive service will be made in accordance with the career-conditional appointment system.

No new indefinite appointments will be made after January 23. Applicants for Federal positions who pass Civil Service examinations and are selected for other than temporary appointments, will be given career-conditional appointments. These employees will be granted competitive status upon completion of a one-year probation period, and after serving three years, their career-conditional appointments will automatically convert to career appointments.

Career-conditional employees have the same annual and sick leave benefits as career employees and are covered by the Civil Service Retirement System. Their reassignment, transfer, promotion, and reinstatement rights are also the same. In a reduction-in-force, career-conditional employees will have greater retention rights than nonstatus employees, but less retention rights than full career employees.

Applicants selected for employment who have not taken appropriate Civil Service examinations will be given temporary appointments. These employees cannot be reassigned, transferred, or promoted; have less retention rights than career-conditional employees during a reduction-in-force, and may be replaced when appropriate examination registers are established. Temporary employees are not eligible for Civil Service retirement, but are covered under Social Security.

ORIENTATION PROGRAM RESUMES HERE

Resumption of the NIH orientation program, known as the Compass Course, is scheduled for January 12. This is the 19th series in the program designed to provide factual information to help new employees adapt quickly to their working environment.

The Core Program, consisting of five one-hour sessions, is attended by all new personnel reporting for duty since June 28, the date the last series started. These sessions are supplemented by two-hour conferences for commissioned officers and for administrative and clerical personnel. Employees participating in this course are scheduled by Institute orientation officers.

Employees who have missed sessions in a previous series will be invited to attend the sessions they missed so that they may complete the program.

Session topics and speakers are: Program of DHEW, by Dr. David Price, Assistant Surgeon General, PHS; Historical Background of PHS and NIH, by Dr. Charles Armstrong; Organization of NIH and the NIH Family, by A. S. Siepert; Current Research Program of NIH, by Dr. Victor Haas; the Environment for Research at NIH, by Dr. W. H. Sebrell, Jr.; the Clinical Center of NIH, by Dr. M. C. Brown; Personnel Program, by G. A. Wilbur and staff; Employee Health Service, by Mrs. Frances Wolford; Fire Prevention, by Kenneth Gettings; and Safety at Work, by James Black.

The program is open to old employees who arrange with their supervisors to be available for all sessions. Registrations for future series are being taken by Miss Carol Long, ext. 3459.
A New Apparatus for Recording Blood Pressure

No. 132 in a Series

A new method of making direct blood pressure records is demonstrated here. Pressure signals obtained from needle in blood vessel are picked up by the strain gauge (left), and pass through the control box (right) to the electrocardiograph (center), where they are recorded.

While the inflated cuff method of taking an indirect blood pressure reading is satisfactory for most diagnostic purposes, it is frequently necessary in cardiovascular research to obtain a very precise pressure measurement directly within the blood vessel. A dependable, inexpensive, easily portable apparatus for making such direct blood pressure records has recently been developed by the NHI Laboratory of Technical Development. This device, when attached to a conventional electrocardiograph, produces accurate pressure recordings formerly available only by the use of costly and complex instruments.

The new instrument, which was designed by Frank W. Noble, Dr. James J. Callaway, and Dr. Bert R. Boone, consists of a control box linking a standard physiological strain gauge and a direct-writing electrocardiograph. Pressure in the blood vessel is measured by the strain gauge and is translated into electrical forms acceptable to the electrocardiograph by the control box. The control apparatus also houses a circuit which enables the investigators to insert a zero pressure reference point into the record at will.

The pressure records thus obtained are of good accuracy, and provide measurements of pulse contours, mean, systolic, and diastolic pressures. The device is expected to provide savings to those physicians and clinicians not having access to expensive pressure recording apparatus.

A sample pressure curve from abdominal aorta shows calibration deflections on the left and the pulse pressure record on the right.

Here and There

Income Tax

Aid in preparing Federal income tax returns will be available after January 20. The Personnel Branch will circulate a list of NIH employees who complete the Internal Revenue Bureau special training course, which ends January 20. Withholding Tax Statements of 1954 Federal taxes withheld from wages were distributed by the Payroll office January 3. The deadline for filing Federal income tax returns is April 15.

Phone Book Additions

Additions to the December 1954 NIH telephone directory include the Shuttle Schedule, CC Pneumatic Tube Stations, and the numbering system of CC rooms. There are 4,048 employees listed, an increase of 203 over the September issue.

Study Group Formed

A technologists' study group has been organized by NCI's Laboratory of Pathology and the Pathologic Anatomy Branch. The group, which has 53 members, meets semimonthly. Officers include Pascal Del Vecchio, president; William Stalters, vice president; Sara DeWitt, secretary; Gebhard Gsell, treasurer, and Frances Regallais, delegate-at-large.

CPC Jobs Changed

Conversion of Guards, Firefighters and Messengers from the Crafts, Protective, and Custodial Schedule to the General Schedule was made effective January 2. This change is in accordance with the provision in the fringe benefits bill abolishing the CPC Schedule.

PHS Exhibit Here

The 100-foot PHS exhibit displayed at the "Health Fair for the Public" in Miami, Fla., last month, has been moved to the CC lobby. The Fair was held in conjunction with the intermin scientific meeting of the American Medical Association.
EMPLOYEE HEALTH NOTES

Each year some 35,000 people are killed accidentally in American homes. Another 5,000,000 receive serious nonfatal home injuries, and dollar losses reach $700,000,000. A resolution to keep accidents out of your home this year may well be the best investment in preventive medicine you ever made. Most home accidents can be prevented if you follow a few simple rules.

Many of our modern electrical appliances are potential safety and health hazards. Be sure that your television set is grounded to minimize fire hazard from lightning. Never place portable radios, heaters, hair dryers, or other appliances within reach of lavatory or tub. Plugs should be regularly inspected for loose prongs, cracked casings or frayed wiring. Eliminate shock hazards by grounding your washing machine.

Careful housekeeping throughout the house and about the grounds can help to prevent many serious home accidents. Never leave anything on the steps, inside or out. Be sure that all scatter rugs are "slipproof." Discard or safely store flammable or toxic materials, and make sure that all medicines are clearly marked.

Special safety measures are necessary for safeguarding the very young and the very old. Keep razor blades, electric iron cords, furniture polish, and other housekeeping items well out of reach. Be sure that open stairways and secondary windows are protected, and that all firearms are safely stored.

MRS. VAN COTT WINS $70 FOR SUGGESTION

Mrs. Cecelia S. Van Cott, Chief Telephone Operator, BOB, received a $70 cash award in a ceremony held December 16. Mr. Homer Greenfield, NIH Communications Section Chief, presented the award.

Mrs. Van Cott recommended de-activation of six of 13 switchboard positions. Her suggestion resulted in a savings to NIH of $1,440 in 1954, and undetermined savings in future years, until eventual reactivation of the switchboard positions will be necessary.

A leading performer in Hamster shows is Martha L. Bacon, NMH, who very skillfully handles the dancing portions.

"Oklahoma" audiences saw Marty as "Curly" in the dream ballet sequence. In order to look more realistic in the role, Marty sacrificed her feminine coiffure to barber shears, and emerged with a very neat male haircut.

Off the Hamster boards, Marty is a physiologist in the Laboratory of Neuropsychology, assisting Dr. Wade H. Marshall, Chief, in studying the electrical activity of the cerebral cortex. She assists in experiments, including the surgical preparation of animals, photography, and histology. A recent project undertaken is the study of the effects of drugs in the brain.

Marty came to NIH from the University of California six years ago, and her first assignment was as a biologist in NCI. In June 1951 she transferred to her present position. At California she helped conduct experiments in the Radiation Laboratory on intermediary metabolism of amino acids and some carcinogenic agents.

Born in Los Angeles, Marty graduated from the University of California, Berkeley. Her parents, brother, and sister live in Berkeley. Marty lives in Silver Spring with her husband, Edward, an electronics engineer for the Department of Defense. They are buying land in Potomac, Md., and hope to build in the near future.

Marty began studying ballet and modern dancing as a child, and still takes lessons occasionally. "Just for the fun of it." She helped plan the choreography in "Oklahoma" and in the previous Hamster production, and has danced in the last three shows. She is chairman of R & W's Modern Dance and Exercise classes.

Her hobbies include swimming, riding, and ice skating. Making her own clothes is one of her favorite indoor pastimes. She likes to travel, too, and hopes to make a trip to Europe some day.

As the New Year rang in, the Association totaled up 1,960 members for 1954, breaking all previous membership records. 1955 Membership Cards are now available from your Division Representative.

Concessions Chairman Bob Campbell reminds us that the price of cokes will have to go up unless all empty bottles are returned to the racks provided. More than $68 worth of coke bottles were lost last month.

At its last meeting, the Executive Council voted to pay for a twice-yearly tuning of the pianos in Wilson Hall, Top Cottage, and the Clinical Center auditorium.

It's still not too late to join the new 10-week series of Modern Dance and Exercise classes, which will start January 17 and 19. Both classes are held from 5:15 to 6:15 in the CC gymnasium. Modern Dance meets on Monday evenings and Exercise on Wednesday evenings. Anyone interested in joining should contact Shirley Hodges on ext. 2559.

Gordon Seger, Choral Group Chairman, announces that the group is now making plans for a spring concert to be given during the Easter season. The Association is trying to establish a permanent choral group of at least 100 voices — so if you enjoy singing with a group, why not join today? The Chorus meets in Wilson Hall each Tuesday from 8 to 10 p.m. For further information, call Dr. Seger on ext. 737.

APPOINTMENTS Cont'd

Existing probational and indefinite registers will be used to make career-conditional appointments. New Civil Service examination announcements will include the career-conditional feature.

Agencies may continue to make job and emergency appointments under the new program.
INFORMATION DESK ANSWERS PUZZLERS

Answering the questions and requests of the hundreds of people who pass daily through the Clinical Center lobby is a job requiring the utmost in patience and tact. In one day, the receptionists at the Information Desk may have to cope with situations ranging from a request to babysit with a visitor’s child to taking care of a worried man and the black widow spider he brought to the desk, and the receptionists have trained themselves never to be surprised or shocked at any question.

Patients’ visitors account for the larger portion of the traffic through the lobby, passing through at the rate of 5,000 a month. In addition to giving directions to the patient areas, the receptionists are often called on to give travel and housing information to out-of-town visitors. Occasionally a visitor will appear at the desk, and the receptionists have trained themselves to handle patient emergencies, after-hours accidents at NIH, and to take care of sick people who ask to be admitted without having gone through the regular referral process. A constant stream of messages to be given and flowers to be delivered to the patients passes over the desk.

Not a small portion of the visitors to the lobby are sightseers or just plain curiosity-seekers. Most of these are dispatched on the regularly scheduled tours of the Center, but many bring special problems with them. Some come to offer bizarre cures for various diseases. Others come to have a mysterious malady diagnosed. One woman came in furtively and asked to have a sample of table cream analyzed — she apparently thought her family was trying to poison her.

Some cases require a bit of detective work from the receptionists. One time they were asked to deliver a package to an NIH doctor by a woman who remembered only that he had a German accent. Hot summer days pose another unique problem for the receptionists — they have to discourage the neighborhood youngsters from taking a dip in the pools of Bethesda.

The desk maintains a complete listing of all CC patients and serves as a focal point for keeping the chaplains up to date on new, discharged, or seriously ill patients. The receptionists keep in close contact with the Officer of the Day and the Nurse Supervisor to handle patient emergencies, after-hours accidents at NIH, and to take care of sick people who ask to be admitted without having gone through the regular referral process. A constant stream of messages to be given and flowers to be delivered to the patients passes over the desk.

The desk is staffed from 8:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. on weekdays, and from 12:30 to 9:30 p.m. on Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays. There are three full-time receptionists — Rachel Walker, Fay Levine, and Marjorie Lamb — and five or six part-time receptionists on call for overtime work.