

Still The Second Best Thing About Payday

## Stem Cell Guidelines Still Pending

### Director's Advisors Bat 6 for 7

By Rich McManus

The scorecard at the end of a daylong session of the advisory committee to the NIH director (ACD) on June 3 read something like this: Yes to more computing muscle in biomedicine; great progress in launching the Council of Public Representatives and drafting guidelines for sharing of research tools; a graduate school at NIH?—Well, maybe; put the Office of Protection from Research Risks outside NIH hierarchically, but keep its soul in science; keep those Consensus Development Conferences coming, but at a slower and less exhaustive (to panelists) pace; and lastly, regarding guidelines governing human pluripotent stem cell research—hang on, folks, we're still deliberating.

"The guidelines are not yet ready," announced Dr. Shirley Tilghman of Princeton University. "It is still a work in progress." She said the human pluripotent stem cell working group is "working on our third, and we hope final, draft." The group's discussions, which NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus noted are "not only arduous, but also (conducted) in the public spotlight," have been "extremely lively," Tilghman reported. "This is not an unopinionated committee."

While it is the responsibility of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission to determine the ethical questions involved in human pluripotent stem cell research (which depends on cells derived from human embryos and fetuses—NBAC's report is due June 28-29), the NIH group is charged with determining how to undertake, in a responsible manner, this kind of research if it is approved. Its guidelines will oversee derivation and use of human

SEE ACD MEETING, PAGE 6

## HIGHLIGHTS

1

Dale and Betty Bumpers VRC Ceremony

Director's Advisors Nearly Finish Agenda

2

HHS Awards Recognize NIH'ers

3

New Computer Service Center

8

Asian Heritage Evening Program A Success



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services National Institutes of Health

June 29, 1999  
Vol. LI, No. 13

Honorees Deeply Moved

## President Clinton Dedicates VRC Cornerstone

By Rich McManus

Professing that "it's not the name on the facade or the beauty of the building that really matters—it's the indescribable relief millions of people all over the world will get as a result of what goes on in that building. That's what really counts," Sen. Dale Bumpers of Arkansas and his wife Betty, longtime advocates of childhood immunization both in their home state and the world, were guests of honor June 9 at a ceremony in which the new Vaccine Research Center cornerstone was dedicated by President Clinton and the building was formally named in their honor.

Built primarily to answer a challenge Clinton issued 2 years ago to develop a vaccine for AIDS within 10 years, the Dale and Betty Bumpers Vaccine Research Center "will be the Cape Canaveral of vaccine research," predicted HHS Secretary Donna Shalala. Anticipating the day when the vaccine effort finally pays off, Sen. Bumpers concluded his remarks in tears: "Betty and I, wherever we are, will smile down and say we had a small role in it."

The heartfelt ending to a 75-minute ceremony conducted in an air-conditioned tent on the outskirts of the VRC construction site touched deeply the hundreds who saw it live, and many others who watched on video.

The ceremony began just slightly late, at 2:47 p.m., when

SEE VRC CEREMONY, PAGE 4



Unveiling the cornerstone of the new Vaccine Research Center at a ceremony June 9 are (from l) HHS Secretary Donna Shalala, President Clinton, Sen. Dale Bumpers and his wife Betty. The Bumperses also got a smaller version to keep as a memento of the occasion.

### NIH'ers Honored by Department

A cadre of NIH employees were among those recognized May 13 at the 1999 HHS Honor Awards Ceremony, presided over by Secretary Donna Shalala. Winning the Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service were:

For their role on the secretary's asthma initiative working group: Rob Fulwood, Andrea Harabin, Suzanne Hurd, Claude Lenfant, George Malindzak, Peter Muehrer, Sheila Newton, Jerry Phelps, Marshall Plaut, Andre Premen, Daniel Rotrosen, Hilary Sigmon, Stanley Slater, Virginia Taggart, Sumner Yaffe, Darryl Zeldin.

For their part in the Smoke-Free Kids & Soccer campaign: William Lynn, Marc Manley, Shelli Miller, Theresa Powers, Barbara Stewart.

For service on the National Guideline Clearinghouse Project Team: Marjorie Cahn, Maureen Prettyman.

For innovation and customer service in managing the NIH committee management and executive secretariat offices: Dr. Vida Beaven.

For exceptional performance in commercializing HHS research discoveries and developing public health policy: Dr. Maria Freire.

For leveraging information technology and fiscal resources to provide NIH a world-class science resource from its desktops: Suzanne Grefsheim.

For exceptional leadership of the global effort to identify a safe and effective vaccine to prevent HIV/AIDS: Dr. Carole Heilman.

For their role on the Maternal/Fetal HIV Transmission Reduction Team: Lynne Mofenson, Anne Willoughby.

Also recognized on the occasion was NIAID's Dr. Louis Miller, who won the Executive Excellence Award for Executive Achievement from the Senior Executives Association "for advancing our understanding of malaria at the molecular level, while encouraging the development of vaccines to control malaria in endemic regions of the world." ■

### Sail with NIHSA, July 10

The NIH Sailing Association invites you to its open house at Selby Bay, where you can sail aboard the club's Flying Scots skippered by sailing instructors and enjoy a picnic on the deck overlooking the boat dock. You're invited to explore your interest in sailing. Consider the 6-week fall beginner class (inexpensive) starting Aug. 25, which prepares you for chartering club boats in the prime fall sailing season. Find out about club sailboat racing and weekend big boat cruising and check out the lively social schedule of the NIHSA. Selby Bay is 45 minutes from NIH. For directions and more information, visit NIHSA's Web site at <http://www.recgov.org/r&w/sailing>. ■



### Courses and Seminars

All courses are on the NIH campus and are given without charge. For more information call 594-3278 or consult the training program's home page at <http://training.cit.nih.gov>.

Disaster Recovery	6/30
NIH Data Warehouse Personnel Costs (Human Resources) Mini Session	6/30
NIH Data Warehouse Procurement and Market Requisitions Mini Session	6/30
Parachute for Windows 95/98	6/30
NIH Data Warehouse Property Management Mini Session	7/1
Introduction to HTML	7/1
Troubleshooting PC Hardware	7/1
Relational Database Overview	7/7
Introduction to the Helix Systems	7/7
Basic Security for Unix Workstations	7/7
Electronic Forms Users Group	7/7
Fundamentals of Unix	7/7-9
Overview of Office 2000	7/8
Introduction to TCP/IP	7/8
NIH Data Warehouse Budget and Finance	7/9
New Features of Remedy 4.0	7/12
Java	7/12,15
WIG - World Wide Web Interest Group	7/13
Using SQL to Retrieve DB2 and Oracle Data	7/13-14
Using Photoshop for Acquiring Scientific Images	7/15
NIH Data Warehouse Travel Mini Session	7/15
NIH Data Warehouse Research Contracts and Grants	7/16
Database Technology Seminar	7/16

### High Cholesterol Study Recruits

The Cardiology Branch, NHLBI, is recruiting patients with high cholesterol levels (250 mg/dL or higher) who have no other medical problems to be included in a 3-day outpatient study. Participants will be paid. Call 496-8739.

## NIH RECORD

Published biweekly at Bethesda, Md., by the Editorial Operations Branch, Division of Public Information, for the information of employees of the National Institutes of Health, Department of Health and Human Services. The content is reprintable without permission. Pictures may be available on request. Use of funds for printing this periodical has been approved by the director of the Office of Management and Budget through Sept. 30, 1999.

NIH Record Office  
Bldg. 31, Rm. 2B03

Phone 496-2125  
Fax 402-1485

#### Web address

<http://www.nih.gov/news/NIH-Record/archives.htm>

Editor  
Richard McManus  
rm26q@nih.gov

Assistant Editor  
Carla Garnett  
cg9s@nih.gov

The NIH Record reserves the right to make corrections, changes, or deletions in submitted copy in conformity with the policies of the paper and HHS.

The Record is recyclable as office white paper.

## 'New' Computer and Electronics Section Ready to Serve

The computer and electronics equipment and software used at NIH can assist you when it's operating well or drive you up the wall when it's not. The computer and electronics section (CES), part of the reorganized Scientific Equipment Instrumentation Branch, is at your service to keep your equipment and software humming along.

CES has a staff of six technicians experienced in working with NIH's wide variety of equipment and software. The section has instituted new services and expedited response time when you call for help. Its goal is to arrange the most convenient, cost-effective way to allow you to resume normal operations. When you call CES with a service request, it will respond (by phone or visit) within 24 hours or less for nonemergencies and within 1-3 hours for an emergency. In order to reduce your downtime, CES will do as much of the repair work as possible in your office or lab.

If CES has to remove your equipment for servicing, it will do as much of the work as it can in its office in Bldg. 13. The section maintains a stock of commonly needed parts like hard drives, floppy drives, power supplies, keyboards and mice. Unless it has to order nonstock parts for your work, CES can normally return the equipment to you within 24 to 48 hours. If CES has to send the equipment offsite, it will work with its network of vendors to obtain the least expensive and most dependable service.

CES has a loaner program of monitors for both Apple and IBM-clone systems to keep you operational while your own monitors are serviced or repaired.

CES offers a broad range of services, including: design and build specialized power supplies, signal amplifiers, transducers and interfaces between computers and other scientific equipment; work on equipment from six major manufacturers (Apple, Compaq, Dell, Hewlett-Packard, IBM and SGI), and, coming soon, Gateway computers and Tektronix printers; service both computers and computer peripherals, including CPUs, monitors, keyboards, mice, printers, scanners, and internal and external storage products (like hard drives, optical drives, cd-roms and tape backup systems); do hardware repairs, upgrades, and new hardware installations for Unix-based workstations including Silicon Graphics, Sun and computers serving as Linux workstations; upgrade and repair older computers as well as newer models; set up new computers and peripherals, including data transfer from your old computer if you wish; resolve hardware conflicts (e.g., a network card that conflicts with a SCSI card); determine if a problem is related to hardware or

software; isolate problems in multi-element equipment configurations (e.g., a spectrophotometer that sends data to both a computer and a printer).

To request service call 496-4131, or to speak with John Olguin, supervisor, CES, call ext. 237. CES' office is in Bldg. 13, Rm. 3W57, and hours are 7 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. ■



*The Epilepsy Foundation recently named Dr. J. Kiffin Penry, former chief of the NINCDS (now NINDS) Epilepsy Branch and director of the Neurological Disorders Division, recipient of its 1999 Distinguished Achievement Award. Penry was posthumously honored at the foundation's annual awards ceremony in Washington, D.C. Until his death in 1996, Penry stood at the forefront of virtually every battle in the war against epilepsy. He initiated and guided the epilepsy research program at NINDS from its beginning as a tiny section through its growth as the world-renowned Epilepsy Branch. He played a key role in the development of new epilepsy medicines that are just now becoming available for patients. He also pioneered electrical stimulation therapy, the newest form of epilepsy treatment. Today's successful diagnosis and treatment of epilepsy are largely due to Penry's contributions to research and clinical care. He was an early advocate for combined video/EEG monitoring—a technology he used to document and verify seizure characteristics. To manage seizure control better, he worked to establish norms for measuring antiepileptic drug blood levels in patients. Shown at the ceremony are (from l) Jeanne Carpenter, foundation immediate past chair, Dr. Henry Kupferberg of NINDS, Martin Penry, who accepted the award on behalf of his father, and Olympic Champion Evelyn Ashford.*

## Healthy Mothers Needed for 'Faces' Study

The Pediatrics and Developmental Neuropsychiatry Branch, NIMH, seeks right-handed mothers age 20-40 with non-adopted, first-born children age 5-12 to participate in an fMRI study on the visual processing of faces. Volunteers should have no history of medical or psychiatric disorders, and should not be taking prescription medication (including birth control pills). The first-born children of volunteers should have no history of psychiatric illness or chronic medical problems. Volunteers must have normal vision or wear contacts. Participation requires a 2-hour screening interview, a followup visit, and a 3-hour visit for fMRI scan. Participants will be reimbursed. For more information, call Lisa Kalik or Neil Santiago at 496-8381. ■

## VRC CEREMONY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Clinton escorted Betty Bumpers, who had had back surgery only 2 days earlier, across the stage erected on parking lot 10D. A warm ovation washed over the President, who had arrived in a motorcade moments earlier. As the guests took their seats, NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus quipped, "Even though I am the host, I'm probably the least familiar face on the stage. This is indeed a great day for the NIH, and a great day for the world. I am glad to welcome the President back to NIH [his first official visit was in August 1995]." He then introduced Shalala, whom he credited with "setting a record every day for length, and more importantly for quality of service, as secretary of Health and Human Services."

Shalala was quick to return the accolade, thanking Varmus "for his brilliant leadership, which may be the legacy (of the Clinton administration) that has

the longest and most sustained impact on this country and on the world." Shalala said of the Bumperses, "They are smart and savvy, and saviors, too. From Arkansas to Washington, to the far corners of the globe, they are guardians of the world's children." She recounted the couple's quarter century of efforts on behalf of childhood immunization, an effort that began in Arkansas (where Dale

Bumpers was elected governor in 1970, then elected to the U.S. Senate in 1974, serving four terms) and was later adopted by every state. "In 1997, the Bumperses were honored in an East Room ceremony when the immunization rate in the United States reached an all-time high—more than 90 percent of the nation's children were immunized by age 2," Shalala recalled. "The message that (the Bumperses) brought to the nation was clear: Vaccinate your children on time, every time." She continued, "The VRC is the next step—it will be the Cape Canaveral of vaccine research, bringing us closer to President Clinton's goal of having an HIV vaccine by the year 2007."

She noted that AIDS "is no longer one of the top 10 leading causes of death in the United States," but cautioned, "We are a long way from winning this battle. While we must do all we can to prevent AIDS, we must also unlock the secrets of this disease." She predicted that Clinton's speech at Morgan State University commencement exercises in May 1997, which launched the vaccine initiative, "will one day be as famous as the grainy black-and-white film of President Kennedy challenging the United States to reach the moon."

Next on the agenda was Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), whose amendment to the FY 1999 omnibus



Clinton said he hopes to return some day to the VRC (rear) to announce the end of AIDS.

appropriation bill named the VRC in honor of the Bumperses; Shalala introduced him, calling him "a strong and ferocious fighter for research, and a great namer of buildings."

Harkin, too, recounted the Bumpers' advocacy on behalf of children, supplying details of their work at the state and federal level, and particularly crediting the partnership that evolved between Betty Bumpers and First Lady Rosalynn Carter that resulted in immunizations becoming standard requirements nationwide for public elementary school enrollment. He also credited Sen. Bumpers and his wife with leading an effort to eradicate polio from the world, and with dramatically increasing funding for community health centers nationwide. "They have always looked out for the unserved, and the underserved," Harkin said.

The President opened on a light note, observing that since Republicans took control of Congress in 1994, "it's been impossible to get anything named for a Democrat. I just came to be sure it really happened." He recalled the words of broadcaster Edward R. Murrow 44 years ago, when Dr. Jonas Salk's polio vaccine "heralded the development of a golden age in medicine" which has led, now, to vaccines for some 20 infectious diseases. "We have



President Clinton gives his trademark "thumbs up" gesture to someone in the audience, as Sen. Dale Bumpers looks on.

PHOTOS: BILL AND ERNIE BRANSON



In a holding room outside the main part of the tent, the President greets guests including the Bumpers' children and grandchildren.

eliminated polio from our own hemisphere, and by early in the new millennium, it will be eliminated from the whole world. This is one of the great achievements of a remarkable 20th century." He called NIH "one of America's great citadels of hope, not only for our people, but also for the world." And he labeled medical triumphs not only victories of scientists, "but also countless citizens, including the couple we honor today.

"More than 25 years ago, Betty (Bumpers) opened my eyes to the fact that too few people in my state were being immunized," said Clinton. He joked, "Betty is so closely identified with the immunization cause that kids cried when she came to visit their schools. They knew that someone was going to get a shot."

He marveled at Mrs. Bumpers' energetic legacy of crisscrossing the country and globe on behalf of children, and informed the audience, "She's here only 2 days after having back surgery, which is the ultimate testament to her grit and determination." And though he admitted he has railed against too-brief hospitalizations, he called Betty, "Exhibit A for drive-by surgery.

"I have long been inspired by Dale and Betty's personal crusade," Clinton said. "It is entirely fitting that today we dedicate this state-of-the-art facility to them. They are two great Americans. This is a hopeful moment for vaccine research in America."

Noting that AIDS is "the leading infectious killer in the world, claiming some 2.5 million lives in 1998," Clinton said, "We can't afford to waste a second in our fight to cure AIDS." He said an AIDS vaccine "will remain the primary mission of the VRC. I am confident this is the place where miracles will happen. I look forward to the day when I can come back here, and in the words of Edward Murrow, with banners flying and trumpets sounding in the distance, announce the end of AIDS. When that day comes, it will be due in large part to the work of the

people at this center, and to Dale and Betty Bumpers."

With that, he unveiled the building's cornerstone, and a smaller, mounted version that the Bumpers can take as a keepsake.

Mrs. Bumpers then spoke briefly, first thanking "my husband for giving me the courage to go and be what I wanted to be while he was governor." She called Rosalynn Carter "my unfailing companion. She was the one who asked me, 'What are we going to do about all these babies dying?'"

Sen. Bumpers told the crowd, "NIH has always been my favorite foil. I always cited that famous statistic, that NIH can only fund 25 or 28 percent of those projects deemed worthy. I could pull it out whenever my colleagues were considering something like the space station, which I detested, or some weapon system the Pentagon didn't need. It has provided me with many opportunities for righteous indignation."

A legendary raconteur and orator, Bumpers picked good-naturedly at the weaknesses of age in one of his trademark jokes, then observed that "if it weren't for Hillary Clinton and Betty, I'd probably be working at the sanitation department back in Little Rock." But his tone became somber as he recalled "a brilliant, sunny afternoon last fall,

at the last appropriation committee hearing I would ever attend," when he realized, at the appearance of two of his grandchildren, that his colleague Harkin was planning to introduce an amendment naming the VRC in his honor.

"There are honors, and there are honors," he began, "and I can think of only one other that even comes close."

He recalled a Sunday long ago in Charleston, Ark., when the town's seven ministers gathered to shepherd the community's children to the local elementary school to take an oral polio vaccine, an innova-

*Sen. Tom Harkin (top) served for many years with Bumpers in the Senate. Below, NIH director Dr. Harold Varmus was host on the occasion.*



*Sen. Dale Bumpers and his wife Betty have spent the last 25 years urging childhood immunization worldwide. "Our gratitude to them cannot be larger," said Varmus.*

### Museum Solicits 'Treasures'

**Do you have old catalogues? Old advertisements? Instruction manuals for instruments you never use anymore? Don't throw them away! As you clean out your labs and offices, think of the NIH museum! What's useless old stuff to you is valuable archival and documentary evidence to the museum. So before you toss that really good stuff out, send an email to [mlyons@helix.nih.gov](mailto:mlyons@helix.nih.gov) or call Michele Lyons, 496-6610. P.S. The museum wants old instruments and devices too.**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

tion "that gave us something no monetary value could match—the tremendous parental relief we felt."

He remembered another Saturday when his colleagues immunized 300,000 children in one day, adding that his wife was administering polio vaccines herself recently in Africa.

"Betty told me the immunization campaign was good for my political career, but it was only a one-shot thing," he recalled. "She said we needed to monitor every child, so she started that day and never stopped. She could not have been more right."

He concluded, "Words could never profess our profound gratitude" for the honor of having the VRC named after them.

Bringing the ceremony to a crisp close on a very hot afternoon, Varmus said, "It's my job to end this wondrous event before it's marred by heat stroke. Years of

dedication and concentration lie ahead of us, but we have done this before on this campus," he said, listing vaccines for haemophilus influenzae, rotaviruses, improved pertussis vaccines, and treatments for other pathogens. "AIDS is different," he cautioned. "HIV is a formidable obstacle, but we will work on that disease as well as malaria, tuberculosis, hepatitis C and others yet to be discovered." Turning toward the Bumperses, he said, "Our feelings of gratitude cannot be larger." And to the President, "We hope to have President Clinton out here next year for the dedication of the Louis Stokes Laboratories, named after a Democrat of Ohio, then again in 2002 for the dedication of the Clinical Research Center, named after Mark O. Hatfield. I know he's not a Democrat, but he's as close as you can get to one."



The President greets new VRC director Dr. Gary Nabel. Looking on is Dr. David Baltimore, chair of the NIH AIDS vaccine research committee.



Entertainers at the event included the World Children's Choir (above) and the Howard University Jazz Quartet.

ACD MEETING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

pluripotent stem cells from fetal tissue as well as use of cells from so-called "spare" embryos created at clinics that treat infertility. Both Varmus and the working group cited the value of the report of a 1994 ACD working group—the human embryo research panel—which drafted recommendations governing potential use of human embryo cells in federally sponsored research; that report yielded taboos that Tilghman said will stand in the new guidelines: no human cloning, no human-animal chimeras, and no creation of novel organisms.

#### Biomedical Information Science and Technology Initiative

"It's a given that we need a lot more money—we want to answer, 'Why?'," began Dr. David Botstein, professor and chair of the department of genetics at Stanford University, who cochaired the working group on biomedical computing. Virtually all fields of biomedicine, both in academia and industry, need much more computing capacity and staff sophisticated enough in both computation and biology to make useful contributions, he said. "Training is the most important unmet need," he continued. "It's the people, not the actual stuff. Bill Gates isn't going to solve the problem for you, if you don't know what to do." The initiative (available on the Web at <http://www.nih.gov/welcome/director/060399.htm>) includes five recommendations, the first of which is that "NIH cause to come into being incentives for some 5 to 20 National Programs of Excellence in Biomedical Computing" devoted to all facets of this emerging discipline, said Botstein. His cochair Dr. Larry Smarr, director of the National Center for Supercomputing Applications, labeled these centers, "watering holes." Botstein added, "We need a new field, with people as professional in computing as in biology, just as we once needed people as competent in chemistry as biology."

Noted 1978 Nobel laureate Dr. Hamilton O. Smith, formerly of NIH but now in private genome science, "We're going to be awash in huge amounts of data—millions of sequence units per day—that needs analysis. I'm predicting that in 5 or 10 years, 25 percent of all research is going to be in the analytical area." Responded Varmus, "I agree with that entirely." He will ask NIH's institutes and centers to propose a variety of initiatives to implement the report, with oversight by a coordinating body.

#### Research Tools, COPR

Dr. Maria Freire, director of NIH's Office of Technology Transfer, reported that her office has published a "road map" governing transfer of materials; the two-part guidelines have been published in the *Federal Register* and are open for 90 days of comment ending Aug. 23. NIH's goal is to ensure academic freedom of publication, foment the

use, commercialization and access of new tools, and generally minimize impediments to research.

NIH Associate Director for Communications Anne Thomas reported on the successful first meeting of Varmus' Council of Public Representatives (COPR) in April, noting that its 20 members are eager to contribute to many NIH activities. "People really want to be involved in helping manage a \$16 billion budget," she said, noting that COPR representatives responded "in a nanosecond" to Varmus' request for COPR participation in a retreat relating to the FY 2001 budget held June 16-17.

#### NIH Graduate Program

Debate about this proposal, first introduced at last December's ACD meeting, and continuing on campus at a town meeting held May 24 in Masur Auditorium, continues to focus on whether there is a national need for NIH to offer Ph.D.s in subjects where there is both a labor shortage and NIH strength: bioinformatics, clinical research and genomics. Acknowledging that she was the plan's most vocal critic 6 months ago, Princeton's Tilghman remains skeptical. "What other options exist for stimulating training (in the needy fields) beside an NIH grad school?" she asked. Dr. Philip Needleman, chief scientist at Monsanto Co., said the proposal "lacks focus," and is diluted by "900 different mentors. You really ought to do something special that's not done in other places. I don't see that here."

Other ACD members, including Dr. Eric Kandel of Columbia University and Dr. Marc Kirschner of Harvard, said the proposal has more solidity and merit now than it had last December. To get a reading on which direction his advisors were taking him, Varmus asked for a straw poll before the group broke for lunch. Though not everyone voted, a clear majority favored continuing with development of the proposal.

Late in the day, Varmus opened the floor to revisit any topic, and again Tilghman spoke up, but this time she allowed that a pilot, specialized grad school focusing simply on bioinformatics might be acceptable. "Take that as your first challenge, then proceed from there," she said.

"We'll think through some of the options we've heard," said Varmus, "and continue some informal discussion. I saw the (straw) vote as at least a partial vote of endorsement, though clearly there is some opposition and resistance. Obviously there are some crevasses in this terrain; everyone is not equally enthusiastic. I must say that the negative votes here do count pretty heavily."

#### Working Group on OPRR

Varmus asked a review panel on OPRR to advise him about where the office should be located

organizationally, and whether it needs more authority to accomplish its mission. The report (at <http://www.nih.gov/welcome/director/060399b.htm>) concludes that, to be effective, OPRR should relocate outside NIH to the Office of the Secretary, HHS, reporting either to the Surgeon General or assistant secretary for health. It also urged the department to upgrade the director's status to the Senior Executive Service level. Additionally, OPRR would benefit from an independent advisory committee, and a larger budget, according to the panel.

"All of us at NIH are very comfortable with the report," said Varmus.

#### Report from OMAR Working Group

For the sixth time in its 21-year history, the Office of Medical Applications of Research's consensus development program came under review; Varmus asked a 9-member working group to identify how Consensus Development Conference processes could be improved to better serve both NIH and the health care system, and to suggest alterations. NIDA director Dr. Alan Leshner chaired the group, which unanimously endorsed continuing the conferences, albeit at a slower, more deliberate pace that he said "targets the moment when the science is there, but the practice is not. We should hold them only when NIH has something to promulgate." The panel urged a departure from the needlessly stressful practice of confining panelists all night before the third and final day of each conference so that a consensus statement can be read to the press the next afternoon. "The compressed time frame was arduous and exhausting," remarked Dr. Christine Cassel of Mt. Sinai Medical Center. Leshner said the conference statement should be separate from the conference itself, appearing some 6-8 weeks later.

"It's good to slow the process down," noted Varmus. "Now we can put the (new) process in place, and seek a replacement for John Ferguson (who is retiring from his post as OMAR director)."

In other personnel-related remarks, Varmus noted that a new NIH associate director for legislative policy and analysis is due July 1—Marc Smolonsky, formerly of the HHS legislative office and a veteran of congressional staff positions. Also, Dr. Constance Battle is the new executive director of the Foundation for NIH; she succeeded Dr. Anne Alexander at the end of May. ■

#### Women Needed for NICHD Study

NICHD's Developmental Endocrinology Branch is seeking healthy female volunteers for endometrial biopsy. Women must be under age 35 and have had at least one child. Compensation provided. If interested, call Dr. Rhonda Hearn, 402-0851. ■

#### Female Volunteers Needed

The Behavioral Endocrinology Branch, NIMH, is seeking female volunteers ages 18-45 to participate in a 5-month study of the effects of reproductive hormones on measures of cerebral activity and blood flow. Volunteers must have regular menstrual cycles with no changes in mood in relationship to menses, be free of medical illnesses and not taking any hormones or medication on a regular basis. They will complete daily rating forms and be asked to participate in studies of cerebral blood flow with positron emission tomography and magnetic resonance imaging. Payment will be in accordance with the duration of each visit and the type of protocol. For more information, call Linda Simpson-St. Clair, 496-9576.

## Faces of the Asian Evening Program

NIH's Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Program concluded celebration of its 27th anniversary with an evening finale titled "Journey Into the New Millennium," on May 28. The annual event, which welcomes children and families as well as NIH employees and guest artists, closed out with performances of Asian music and dance.

PHOTOS: ERNIE BRANSON



The Thai Cultural Group of Washington performs.



During the evening, recipients of the 1999 NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Organization outstanding achievements and scholarship awards are honored. Top (from l) are Dr. Robert Hammond, who won for significant accomplishments in advancing NIH/IC's EEO goals; and Drs. Suresh Ambudkar, Carl Wu, Zhengping Zhuang, recognized for scientific excellence; (bottom, from l) Jennifer Song, 1999 scholarship recipient; Dr. Bill Bunnag, NIH/APAO president; and Dr. Rashmi Gopal, emcee (along with Dr. Victor Fung) and awards committee chair.



At left and below, the Washington Korean Dance Company uses drums; at right, the Dance for Health Society of Washington performs an Indian folk dance.



A Japanese Kikyuki dancer dons a mask.



Above, the Glorystar Children's Chorus offers music; at right, the Indian Sri Kuchipudi Dance Academy, which danced too swiftly for the camera, strikes a pose afterwards instead.

