

THE NIH RECORD

Still The Second Best Thing About Payday

Gene-busting over Gang-banging

NIAID's Cabral Receives Soros Fellowship

By Matthew Holder

Erik Cabral is a living testament of the American dream. The son of Mexican immigrants who once worked as migrant farmers, Cabral—now a pre-doctoral researcher in NIAID's Laboratory of Clinical Investigation—recently received a coveted Soros fellowship for his first 2 years of medical school at Stanford University.



Erik Cabral

Just a few years ago, Cabral didn't dream of going to college, much less conducting research at NIH or pursuing a medical degree.

SEE CABRAL, PAGE 4

Ho To Lecture on HIV-1 Replication

Internationally recognized HIV/AIDS researcher and Presidential Medal recipient Dr. David D. Ho will present the James C. Hill Memorial Lecture at NIH on Tuesday, May 20. His talk, titled "The Dynamics of HIV-1 Replication *In Vivo*," will begin at 2 p.m. in Lipsett Amphitheater, Bldg. 10.

Ho is the founding scientific director and chief executive officer of the Aaron Diamond AIDS Research Center, a world-renowned biomedical research institute. He is also the Irene Diamond professor at the Rockefeller University.

He has been doing HIV/AIDS research for 20 years, and has published more than 250 papers on the subject. He is perhaps best recognized for elucidating the dynamic

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NIH Awards Clear Communication

Veteran Journalist Cokie Roberts Lauds 'Plain Language'

By Carla Garnett

Although the origin of the "K.I.S.S. principle" may be in debate, most professional communicators can agree with its curt advice: "Keep It Simple, Stupid." That guiding principle, adopted government-wide several years ago under the federal Plain Language Initiative, was once again celebrated at NIH on Apr. 23 with an awards ceremony honoring writers, editors and other communicators whose products hit the mark.



Cokie Roberts

For the third straight year, NIH invited a highly regarded journalist to share the occasion and offer helpful hints for communicating well. For the first time this year, however, NIH got two for one—not only a professional's perspective on how it should be done, but also a consumer's view of how well we've done.

SEE PLAIN LANGUAGE, PAGE 8

From Transylvania, With Love

Call of Wild Lures NCI Artist-Scientist Marcu

By Rich McManus

On her morning walk to work at a low-rise rental facility in the biotech 'burbs off Route 28 in Rockville, NCI scientist Dr. Monica Marcu passes one of the last active farms in mid-Montgomery County. Seeing the horses and cows there is as much a stimulant to her workday as a snort of coffee is to most of her fellow NIH'ers. That's because nature is her refuge, her nourishment and, quite often, the subject matter of an artistry she has mastered in just the last half decade or so: "paintography," or photography enhanced by brushstrokes applied to color slides either manually or digitally.



Dr. Monica Marcu

A typical Marcu image is both beautiful and vivid, almost psychedelically so. Tour through her work at

SEE PHOTOGRAPHER, PAGE 6

DAVID HO, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

nature of HIV replication in infected persons. This basic understanding led Ho and his coworkers to champion combination antiretroviral therapy, including the use of protease inhibitors, which has resulted in dramatic reductions in AIDS-associated mortality in developed countries since 1996.

Ho continues to pursue therapeutic studies that attempt to eradicate HIV. His research team is trying to develop a vaccine to halt the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

He received his B.S. from the California Institute of Technology and his M.D. from Harvard Medical School. Subsequently, he did his clinical training in internal medicine and infectious diseases at the University of California at Los Angeles School of Medicine and also at Massachusetts General Hospital.

In recognition of his scientific accomplishments, Ho has received numerous honors and awards. In 2001, he received a Presidential Medal. He has also received six

honorary doctorates including from Swarthmore, Tufts, Columbia and the University of Natal. He has been chosen as the commencement speaker at Caltech, MIT and Harvard School of Public Health. Additional accolades include the Ernst Jung Prize in Medicine, the Squibb Award, the Hoechst Marion Roussel Award and the Mayor's Award for Excellence in Science & Technology from the New York Academy of Sciences. He is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, Academia Sinica (Republic of China), and the Institute of Medicine, National Academy of Sciences.

Named *Time* magazine's Man of the Year in 1996, Ho is also an honorary professor at both Peking Union Medical College and Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences. Currently, he serves on the board of overseers of Harvard University and board of trustees of the California Institute of Technology.

The NIAID-sponsored lecture is dedicated to the memory of Dr. James C. Hill who, as NIAID deputy director, played an important role in the early years of the AIDS epidemic. Hill worked closely and tirelessly with institute staff and was a cohesive force in NIAID's relations with other government agencies, Congress, activists and other community and political leaders.

A reception will follow the lecture, and all are invited to attend. ■

Pulmonary Sarcoidosis?

Call NIH at 1-800-411-1222 (TTY: 1-866-411-1010) or email prpl@cc.nih.gov for a study comparing a medication called pentoxifylline and a placebo (sugar pill). Must be on standard steroid treatment. ■



Dr. David D. Ho will present the James C. Hill Memorial Lecture at NIH on Tuesday, May 20.

Statins Tested in Kids with Lupus

A new study funded by the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases will be using statins—drugs used to lower LDL (low-density lipoprotein or “bad” cholesterol levels)—to test their effects against fat buildup in the blood vessels of children with lupus. Pediatric patients with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE) are sometimes affected by this fat buildup, also called atherosclerosis. In SLE, inflammation and damage to various body tissues can affect the joints, skin, kidneys, heart, lungs, blood vessels and the brain.

Dr. Laura Schanberg of Duke University Medical Center and Dr. Christy Sandborg of Stanford University and their colleagues are conducting this 5-year study, known as the APPLE (atherosclerosis prevention in pediatric lupus erythematosus) trial, which will test 280 children diagnosed with SLE. The double-blind, placebo-controlled trial will randomize patients to receive either statins or a placebo for 36 months. Atherosclerosis will be measured at baseline and at 6-month intervals using ultrasound imaging. The researchers hope that the statin treatment will have preventive effects on the arterial fat buildup that may occur in young lupus patients.

The study is being carried out in collaboration with the Childhood Arthritis and Rheumatology Research Alliance.

SLE is a chronic, inflammatory, autoimmune disease. Women are much more likely to have the disease than men, and prevalence is higher among African Americans, Asians and Native Americans than Caucasians. ■

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NIH Record Office
Bldg. 31, Rm. 5B41

Phone 496-2125
Fax 402-1485

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

Editor
Richard McManus
rm26q@nih.gov

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Assistant Editor
Carla Garnett
cg9s@nih.gov

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SARS Bars Canada Parley

NCI Hosts Poster Session for Would-Be Conference Goers

By Jennifer Michalowski

On Apr. 2, worldwide concern about an outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome in Toronto prompted the American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) to cancel its annual meeting in that city, scheduled to begin just 3 days later. Of the 16,000 expected attendees, about 500 were from the National Cancer Institute.

While AACR promised registrants that the meeting would be rescheduled for later in the year, NCI director Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach thought it was important that researchers have a more immediate opportunity to present their data to their peers. "We wanted to be sure to maintain the momentum stimulated by AACR," he commented. "We thought an NCI poster session would be the best way to keep scientific interactions and potential collaborations moving forward."

To that end, he invited all those who had planned to attend the meeting to present their data at a rapidly organized poster session staged in the Clinical Center on Apr. 7. Space was made available for 200 posters.

Many NCI scientists took advantage of the opportunity to share with their NIH colleagues posters originally intended for the AACR meeting. "The turn-out was pretty good, even though it was short notice," observed Dr. Chad Ellis, a fellow in the Cell and Cancer Biology Branch, whose poster described a novel family of Ras-like proteins that inhibit cell growth.

Like many participants, he was particularly pleased to have had the opportunity to discuss his work with von Eschenbach, who attended the session and took time to speak with each presenter.

The highly visible location in the CC exhibit hall encouraged passersby from NCI and other institutes to stop and talk with presenters. Attendees said the smaller session fostered conversations that might not have occurred at the large AACR meeting.

"It was nice to have it within NCI," observed Arpita Mehta, a Tufts University medical student who is spending a year at NCI's Clinical Proteomics Program as part of the Howard Hughes Medical Research Cloister Program. "You can set up potential collaborations knowing the person is going to be right there." Mehta's work focuses on designing specific combinations of drugs and drug doses to individualize cancer treatment for each patient.

"Many people I've never met before offered suggestions and asked questions about my work," said Dr. Claudia Palena, a Fogarty visiting fellow in the Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Biology. Her poster described *in vitro* experiments testing whether B-cells infected with vectors expressing multiple costimulatory molecules can be used as

antigen presenting cells for cancer vaccines, rather than the more commonly used dendritic cells, which she says are difficult to isolate and grow in culture.

Dr. James Gulley, co-director of the clinical trials group in the Laboratory of Tumor Immunology and Biology, presented preliminary results of a phase II trial for localized prostate cancer treatment, comparing radiation to radiation in combination with a new prostate cancer vaccine; the trial evaluated safety, immune response and recurrence of disease. "I was right in the thick of things; traffic at the poster was very good," he noted. "I think the hit rate at the AACR might have been lower, because of the overwhelming number of competing posters and oral presentations."

AACR has since announced that its annual meeting has been rescheduled for July 11-14 at the new Washington Convention Center. Many of those who attended the NCI poster session are looking forward to sharing their work with the international community of scientists that will come to D.C. for the event. ■



On Apr. 10, NIAID director Dr. Anthony Fauci (third from l) received the 2003 Ellis Island Family Heritage Award of the Statue of Liberty-Ellis Island Foundation for his contributions to the American experience, specifically in science and medicine. Also on hand were (from l) foundation founding chairman and former Chrysler CEO Lee Iacocca; awardee and baseball legend Yogi Berra; awardee and actress Cicely Tyson; awardee Abie Abraham, a World War II hero who survived the Bataan Death March; Kelly Hope, accepting the award of behalf of his father, entertainer Bob Hope; and football great and broadcaster Frank Gifford, host of the ceremony. All of the awardees trace their family roots through the Golden Door of Ellis Island; Fauci is the grandson of Italian immigrants.

Trauma Survivors Needed

NIMH is seeking volunteers over 18 years old who suffer from post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) to participate in research studies that include mental health assessment, brain imaging (compensation provided) and/or a medication trial. Call 1-866-627-6464 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). ■

Women's Health IG Meets, May 21

The women's health special interest group will meet on Wednesday, May 21, from 10:30 a.m. to noon in Wilson Hall, Bldg. 1. Guest speaker will be Dr. Donald W. Pfaff of the Rockefeller University. His topic will be "Sex Hormone Effects on Specific Brain Mechanisms and on Generalized Brain Arousal."

CABRAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

During his freshman year of high school in downtown San Jose, Calif., he failed so many classes that he stopped going to school. Knowing that his parents came to the United States in order to provide him with more opportunities, he returned to school the following year.

This time he studied late into the night each day. His motivation was simple. Studying kept him away from street gangs that killed one of his friends. "I sheltered myself in books," Cabral said. "It was the one way for me to escape the negativity in my neighborhood."

The studying paid off. He stayed away from the gangs, and he started making A's and B's. In fact, his high grades qualified him for the Stanford Medical Youth Science Program, a 5-week residential summer program that introduces disadvantaged students to college-level science

courses, as well as role models and mentors.

The experience changed his life. Before, his only goal was graduating high school. It had never occurred to him to continue his education beyond that point. As Cabral's grades continued to improve, he began taking college courses at San Jose State in addition to his high school courses, and he participated in several other college preparatory programs the following summer. For one of those programs—the National Hispanic Youth Initiative (NHYI)—he traveled to Washington, D.C., where he met Marc Horowitz, director of NIH's Office of Loan Repayment and Scholarship, and learned about NIH for the first time.

Horowitz spoke at the NHYI to tell students about a new program—NIH's Undergraduate Scholarship Program for Students from Disadvantaged Backgrounds (UGSP). Cabral spoke with Horowitz and got on a mailing list to receive information on the program once it was fully implemented.

During his senior year, Cabral successfully applied to Stanford University, and during the summer, he applied and was accepted to the UGSP, becoming part of the first cohort of the new NIH program, which provides disadvantaged students with scholarship funding, as well as research internships and mentors at NIH.

During his summer internships at NIH, Cabral trained with Dr. Stephen Straus, chief of NIAID's Laboratory of Clinical Investigation, and Dr. Rona LeBlanc. During his two summers in the lab he studied the role of interleukin 6, an immune system protein, in the pathogenesis of herpes simplex type 1. The study aimed to learn more about the rela-

tionship between the immune system and the reactivation of latent viruses. Cabral co-authored a publication on the work in the *Journal of Virology* (October 1999) and expanded on the study to write his honor's thesis at Stanford.

After graduating from Stanford in 2000, Cabral returned to the Laboratory of Clinical Investigation to work with Drs. Adriana Marques and Roland Martin to study gene expression patterns in Lyme disease patients. The lab is focusing on determining if there is a genetic explanation as to why some individuals fully recover from Lyme disease while others experience continuing symptoms.

Later this summer, Cabral will complete his project and return to Stanford in pursuit of his medical degree with support from the Paul and Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans.

Since being established in 1997, the Soros fellowships have quickly become one of the most highly recognized and sought-after awards for graduate study in the United States. Nearly 1,100 applicants competed for 30 fellowships this year, which provide a \$20,000 stipend and half-tuition for 2 years of graduate study.

The UGSP is unique in its combination of intensive research training and mentoring with scholarship support. Cabral, along with the other UGSP scholars, has demonstrated the potential for such programs to create a pipeline for students from disadvantaged backgrounds to enter biomedical research fields and to increase diversity in the intramural research program.

Cabral is actually the second UGSP scholar to receive a Soros fellowship. Last year, Jose Vargas, also a 1996 UGSP scholar, received a Soros fellowship to support his medical degree at Harvard University. Vargas also received a Rhodes scholarship in 1999 and completed his Ph.D. in functional genetics at Oxford this winter.

Three UGSP scholars have been honored with Fulbright fellowships: Brandon Ogbunugafor (currently conducting research at the International Centre of Insect Physiology and Ecology in Nairobi, Kenya), Kirk Pak (now studying at Oxford) and Beata Ziolkowska (currently at Harvard Medical School). ■

Chamber Music Concert, May 25

The Rock Creek Chamber Players will give a free public concert at 3 p.m. on Sunday, May 25 in the Clinical Center's 14th floor assembly hall. The concert, sponsored by the recreation therapy section, will include sixteenth and seventeenth century songs, a trio sonata by Quantz, a trio for brass instruments by Poulenc and Mendelssohn's string quartet, Op. 44, No. 1. For more information, call (202) 337-8710. ■



During his two summers in the lab at NIH, Erik Cabral studied the role of interleukin 6; later, he co-authored a publication on the work in the Journal of Virology (October 1999) and expanded on the study to write his honor's thesis at Stanford.

The 'Health Information Rx'

NLM, Partners Launch Patient Information Program

Doctors often prescribe medication after seeing a patient. But what if that doctor also wants to direct the patient to up-to-date, reliable, consumer-friendly information about a health concern? Under a pilot program recently launched in Georgia and Iowa, physicians throughout those states will be able to do just that.

NLM has teamed up with the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine Foundation (ACP-ASIM Foundation) to create the "Health Information Rx" (information prescription) program. Now, internists will receive customized prescription pads that they can use to point patients to first-rate online health information in the library's MEDLINEplus database (www.medlineplus.gov).

Kickoff events took place in Atlanta on Mar. 18 and in Des Moines on Apr. 7. Former HHS Secretary Louis W. Sullivan, president emeritus of Morehouse School of Medicine, spoke at the Atlanta



Dr. Donald Lindberg (l), NLM director, meets with Dr. Michael Kienzle (c) of the Iowa chapter of the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine, and Iowa Sen. Tom Harkin. At the Apr. 8 event in Des Moines, Harkin was the recipient of the first Information Rx in the state of Iowa.

event, along with Georgia Lt. Gov. Mark Taylor. Special guests in Des Moines included U.S. Sen. Tom Harkin (D-IA) and Whitney Addington, chair of the ACP-ASIM Foundation.

Why do NLM and the foundation consider this project so important?

"Physicians have always known that an informed patient who takes an active role is a 'better' patient," said NLM director Dr. Donald Lindberg, who appeared at the Georgia and Iowa launches. "We believe that both patients and their doctors will welcome this additional medical tool—good medical information—in their continuing efforts to provide good health care. Medical and public libraries will play an important role in the success of the Information Rx project, just as they have with

MEDLINEplus itself," he added. "We look forward to working with the members of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine in this project."

With contents culled from the NIH institutes and other public and private health sites on the Internet, MEDLINEplus has information on more than 600 health topics. Under each, patients

will find nuts-and-bolts information on symptoms, diagnosis and treatment, current news stories, research studies, clinical trials, helpful graphics and even interactive tutorials. There's detailed but easy-to-read information on thousands of over-the-counter and prescription drugs, too. And MEDLINEplus is also available in Spanish.

Why is it important that doctors steer their patients to MEDLINEplus? Can't they just suggest the patients do a general Internet search?

"Unfortunately, some patients lack the knowledge needed to find good health care information online," commented Harkin. "Also, they might not be able to guard against marketing schemes disguised as web sites."

According to recent research, 6 million Americans go online daily to search for information about health and disease. Additional findings show that nearly 70 percent of patients nationwide would pay serious attention to a web site recommended by their physician.

"Used properly, the Internet can be just as helpful a healthcare tool as the biopsy, the x-ray and the electrocardiogram," observed former HHS Secretary Sullivan in Atlanta. "That is why I hope doctors in Iowa and Georgia will embrace the Health Information Rx program, directing patients eager for good consumer health information to the gold standard, MEDLINEplus. I think they'll find that, used in conjunction with their doctor's good care, information is the best medicine." ■

Employee Needs Organ Donation

An NIDDK employee with type A blood is in need of a kidney transplant. If there is anyone interested in being tested as a possible donor match that has either type A or O blood, call Wanda at (301) 524-7432. Federal government donors can use up to 30 days of donor leave, which is not associated with your sick or vacation leave. ■



The Atlanta launch of the "Health Information Rx" project featured (from l) Lindberg; Dr. Louis W. Sullivan, former HHS secretary; Mark Taylor, lieutenant governor of Georgia; Sara Walker, president, ACP-ASIM board of regents; and Dr. Joe Stubbs, governor, Georgia chapter, ACP-ASIM.

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PHOTOGRAPHER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

www.photomarcu.com and the subject matter seems familiar enough—trees, mountains, lakes, notable architecture, flowers, wild animals, even traffic jams—but look again and the images glow in an odd way. They're not straight, sober, faithful representations, but buzzing, hyperalert, reality-drenched mementoes; she consciously attempts to imbue them with a feeling only hinted at by the naked image.

"My images are not documentaries," says Marcu, who trained in pharmacy at Cluj in her native Romania, and earned a Ph.D. in pharmacology at the University of Ottawa, Canada. "It's about what you feel, not just what you see. It's what I want to express. I'm an impressionist photographer."

Fewer than 5 percent of her photographs, she guesses, "are so perfect that they need no further work." She estimates her slide collection now totals more than 10,000.

Marcu began taking pictures, with a Russian 35mm camera, while a young girl in her home town of Transylvania. "Cameras were very expensive in Romania," she remembers. People were her first subjects, because they were the closest.



"Maple Symmetry"

"My mother was quite a good photographer," she recalls. Marcu also loved to draw, and for a time studied painting. She only began studying photography as a profession some 4 years ago, at an NIH/FAES course taught by longtime NIH photographer Dr. Richard Sprott. Since then she has attended many workshops, read a lot, and collected a slew of honors, including having images accepted for *Best of Photography Annual* for both 2001 and 2002, and being invited to participate in exhibits from Norfolk, Va., to the Clinical Center (she

had five pieces in a fall 2002 gallery show there) to Brookside Gardens in Wheaton, where her work was featured through May 1. Even her web site has won an award, from ProFotos.

An unabashed hugger of trees, sniffer of leaves, and embracer of the wilderness (she hopes one day to die there, she says, "not in a hospital"), Marcu—who spends almost all of her annual leave heading for the hills with her husband Michael—was for many years a sickly and unrobust person. "I was a very sick child, and was fragile for most of my life," she recalls. "I used to get three or four flues a year. I was even excused from Army service," said Marcu, who lived in Romania until age 27. "But all of this changed when I turned toward the natural world, and began to meditate."

In addition to practicing Transcendental Meditation twice a day (a habit she adopted 13 years ago to counter the stress of graduate school studies—she claims it heightens both her senses and intuition, and imparts energy), Marcu insists on offices with windows and natural light, eats a predominantly vegetarian diet ("mostly raw, organic foods and filtered water") and spends most weekends and holidays (the European term for



Marcu enjoys her work.

"Assiniboine Mountain"
Canadian Rockies



vacations) in such unpeopled places as Blackwater Falls, W.Va., rural Pennsylvania, and most paradisiacally, the glacier-mown regions of the Canadian Rockies. "We never go to cities—we spend our long holidays in the wilderness," she says.



"Blue Eyes"

"And we take 15 to 20-mile hikes every day. We prefer the mountains, and difficulty." The latter she got in spades on a trip last year to the Canadian Rockies: she was snuck up upon by a young grizzly bear, who bore down on her until her husband rose up and made a scary racket with some sticks and stones. "That's

the strongest proof that my husband really loves me," she laughs, recalling the incident. Undeterred by nature's occasional inclemency, Marcu and her husband plan a trip in June to the Great Smoky Mountains in Tennessee and future expeditions to Alaska, and eventually New Zealand, the Himalayas and Tibet. Meanwhile, she is consumed with lab work on heat shock proteins and chaperones in the Center for Cancer Research's tumor cell biology section, headed by Dr. Len Neckers. With only a year left on

her research appointment, she is looking for a future job, and hopes to remain with NIH. Ironically, she is not content with mere "scientist" as a career ambition. Not only is she skeptical of the power of science alone to explain nature—and, most notably, to cure our ailments—she believes there is a higher aspiration, "what Leonardo da Vinci called the *Arte-Scienza* (or whole-brain thinking). I want to be an *Arte-Scienza* scholar. I want to use both hemispheres of my brain."

Marcu also wants to be an ambassador for Nature, a welcomer of all who are stressed, ill and tired to take advantage of nature's restoring bounty, so freely available yet so widely underutilized.

"It's open for everybody who wants to explore it," she says.

In a way, her nature photos, taken with her trusty Nikon N90 camera, are posters for a more expansive, healthier lifestyle, and she is anxious to display them. This desire has a cost, however; she works on her avocation some 30 hours a week, often foregoing, she chuckles, "the housework and cooking. "It's like another job for me...I go to bed late," she laughs, "and watch very little TV."

Her pharmacy expertise aside, she is a strong believer in natural remedies, and says people have enormous recuperative powers, given enough time, proper advice and nourishment. "People don't need most drugs," she declares. "I stand as a witness. There is nothing so much of a blessing as being healthy and strong.

"I try to enjoy life as much as I can," she concludes. "I'm a person who stops to smell the flowers. It gives me so much joy. I want to feel life in all its aspects. We must protect our natural resources—they are absolutely irreplaceable. This planet is all we have, and it is wonderful."

To see Marcu's recent images of winter scenes and a new collection of spring flowers, visit her web site, dedicated to "photography with love." ■



"Rose"



"You Grow, Girl"



PLAIN LANGUAGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

"I am the person you are aiming at in two ways," said guest speaker and veteran journalist Cokie Roberts. "First, I am an NIH cancer patient. I cannot tell you how incredibly useful it has been to me to have all the information that I have received at this fine institution as I have gone through treatments. I have been deeply, deeply grateful for the amount of information, the clarity of the information and for the fact that it does not talk down to you. [The health material] gives you a great deal of information and gives you places you can go if you really want to know every living organism in the therapy. I am also the audience you're aiming at as a member of the press. I receive the press releases and I'm happy to say that you're also doing a remarkable job there."

Completely overhauling the way federal employees communicate is not an easy undertaking, explained Karen O'Steen, director of NIH's Executive Secretariat and chair of the NIH plain language coordinating committee. But the effort was necessary.

"The traditional way of writing government documents just hasn't served us very well," she said. "Too often it's produced complicated, jargon-filled documents that have resulted in confusion, frustration and a complete lack of trust between citizens and their government. As a result, several years ago 'Plain Language' emerged as a government-wide initiative to improve our communication with the public, other government agencies and with each other."

NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni, who has made communication a top priority at NIH and who has promoted efforts to make the agency as transparent as possible to the people it serves, acknowledged the double challenge of simplifying both government and science issues.

"It's hard enough to communicate science," he said. "To make government speak clearly in the context of an agency that also does science must require twice as much effort. One of the most difficult things I've found in my career is to convey science in simple terms, because we tend to have jargon.

We tend to use jargon across the sort of elite group that train together and conduct science together. All of sudden we forget that we're doing science for the people. We forget that communicating the science to the people does require effort."

The special hurdles NIH communicators must overcome were referred to humorously by O'Steen: "Only at NIH would one of the top-ranked plain language products be a CD-ROM on demonstrating rodent surgery. It contains crystal clear instructions on performing surgery in a manner that won't cause undue harm to a mouse or rat, and even comes with a practice device to master suturing techniques."

Cokie Roberts shows samples of effective communication aimed at NIH patients.



Even with the additional challenges, NIH communication specialists have found numerous plain-spoken ways to rise to the top, Zerhouni said. He noted that the NIH web site frequently receives the most traffic of all federal web sites, and that about 5 million visits per month

are recorded on the site. People are very hungry for information about health, he observed.

"We want to congratulate all of you for your efforts," Zerhouni added. "I don't believe you can communicate something you don't really understand well. In fact, the simplicity and clarity with which you communicate are testaments to how well you understand the science you are supposed to communicate."

A longtime chief congressional analyst for ABC News and syndicated columnist for National Public Radio, Roberts said she recently had the opportunity to write about an unfamiliar topic, a scientific issue—the completion of the Human Genome Project. She said she had accumulated several articles and other information on the subject, including a press release from the National Human Genome Research Institute. Contrasting the release with a *New York Times* article, Roberts said although the topic itself was in general a difficult one to grasp, NHGRI's material was much easier for the lay community to understand.

"It is useful to write about things outside of your field," she recommended. "You realize that any words you don't know, probably nobody else does either. The problem is when you're writing in your own field. You don't always have that understanding. It is true that whenever you're writing about a subject you know well, you fall into familiar jargon."

Many fields have their own language that often proves to be impenetrable to people who are not

PHOTOS: MARK E. WALDO, JR.



NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni puts a premium on open communication.

At the forefront of NIH's Plain Language awards event are (from l) Karen O'Steen, director of NIH's Executive Secretariat and chair of the PL coordinating committee; guest speaker Cokie Roberts; Ann Brewer, PL coordinator; NICHD deputy director Dr. Yvonne Maddox, who introduced Roberts; and Zerhouni.



devotees, she explained. Consider sports, she quipped. "I can read whole articles and not understand very much at all."

Roberts shared a rule of thumb about employing words and special terms.

"If you have to look it up," she said, "don't use it. That's a very good rule." Of course, there are times when such unfamiliar language is necessary, she said, particularly in science and health. Then, it's up to a good writer to explain the terms clearly and put the material in context for the consumer.

Roberts also referred to an important component of good writing—and



Roberts and Zerhouni

of history—that the Age of Computers has made nearly obsolete. The backspace key has virtually eliminated our ability as writers to review our first attempts, and save for posterity the successive attempts to improve our products.

"We've lost a lot for history in first drafts," she said. "[For example] we have the first draft of the Declaration of Independence and we see how Thomas Jefferson scratched through or changed words to have a different meaning or to say it in a more precise fashion. We've lost all of that with the computer, because we're always just hitting the delete button and typing over what we've already done."

Finally, Roberts said, good communicators are disciplined. They know not to dump mounds of data on readers. Regardless of the tremendous amount of fact-collection that communicators may do before they actually write anything, she said, consumers rely on good writers to stick to their principle, the K.I.S.S. principle.

Concluded Roberts: "I often see the discipline to start writing as the thing that separates neophyte writers from professional writers. You keep wanting to learn more. You don't have the confidence to stop researching and start writing. You don't have to tell us everything you learned, you just have to tell us what's important about what you learned. That's where clarity becomes so important and simplicity is key."

More than 270 products were nominated for this year's Plain Language awards, which were presented in three categories—superior, outstanding and honorable mention. To view the full list of honorees online, visit <http://execsec.od.nih.gov/plainlang/awards/current/honoring.html>. ■

OSE Needs Volunteers for the Community

As a student, were you ever inspired by a teacher or a visitor to your classroom? Before you became an NIH professional, were you ever curious about the mysterious disease afflicting your friend or family member? Did you dream of an exciting career? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, then here's your chance to give back to the community, uncover the mysteries and inspire others.

The Office of Science Education (OSE) coordinates two volunteer services—the NIH Speakers Bureau and the NIH Science Fair Volunteers—through which you may share your knowledge and expertise. The Speakers Bureau is a list of NIH professionals who are available to speak at local schools and other organizations about NIH, a specific science or medical topic or their own research or career. OSE's latest effort, the NIH Science Fair Volunteers, is a list of employees who are available to judge science fairs. Both services function through a user-friendly database on the web, and are available to schools and other organizations in the Washington metropolitan area.

In preparation for the 2003-2004 school year, OSE is counting on NIH's support to increase the pool of volunteers. Whether you're a research scientist, clinician, technician or an administrative and support professional, all employees may volunteer. Visit <http://science.education.nih.gov/Volunteers> to learn more or sign up. Who knows—you just may inspire a dream.

Get Ready to 'Race for the Cure'

Registration for Team NIH continues. For those who haven't registered there is still time to do so either at local malls, coffee shops, stores and schools throughout the area or online at www.nationalracefortheure.org/registration.html. The in-person registration fee is \$25; the online fee is \$30 before May 17 and \$35 from May 17-30. There will also be onsite race day registration on June 7. Don't forget to indicate the code "NIH" when registering.

Race packet distribution (for those who registered at Bldg. 10) will be 11 a.m.-2 p.m., June 4-5 outside the second floor cafeteria in the Clinical Center.

On the morning of the race, Team NIH will gather at 8 a.m. at the corner of 15th St. and Constitution Ave. (look for the large pink NIH signs). For more information on Team NIH, contact one of the team coordinators: Pat Piringner, ppiringner@cc.nih.gov, 402-2435; Georgie Cusack, gcusack@cc.nih.gov, 594-8128; or Dianne Needham, dneedham@cc.nih.gov, 594-5788. Visit www.nationalracefortheure.org for more details and background on the race. ■

Conference on 'Patient-Centered Care'

The first annual Epidaurus Conference on Patient-Centered Care will be held Friday, May 23, from 8 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. (with continental breakfast at 7:30 a.m.) at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. The conference will bring together leaders in the field of patient-centered care, including physicians, administrators, architects and bioethicists, along with patient advocates, to examine the challenges and principles of patient-centered program and facility design. Participants will look at what is possible in changing health care delivery and how to get there. Cosponsors include USUHS, Association of Academic Health Centers, Georgetown University and NIAMS. Registration is free to the first 200 registrants. Details and online registration are available at <http://hsa.usuhs.mil/epidaurus>.

*Distinguished Alumni Return***History Office Examines Fifties Intramural Research**

On Apr. 11, the Office of NIH History, along with NIMH and NINDS, sponsored a special symposium called "NIMH and NINDS Intramural Research in the 1950s." The purpose was to open the door for historical research on how the basic and clinical investigations programs at both institutes emerged and changed over the first decade of their existence. Alumni from the basic and clinical programs of each institute presented talks followed by discussion. Many scientists brought personal historical photographs, correspondence, unpublished documents, laboratory notebooks, artifacts, memos and other items from this period to add to the collection of the Office of NIH History.

Two Institutes, One Intramural Program

A dearth of trained mental health providers to treat the large number of military discharges and casualties related to psychological problems during World War II spurred Robert Felix, director of the Public Health Service's Division of Mental Hygiene, to propose a bill to create a National Neuropsychiatric Institute. The bill was introduced in 1945 and



On hand for the meeting were NINDS and NIMH alumni (from l) Dr. Mortimer Mishkin, Dr. Allan Mirsky, Dr. Theodore Zahn, Dr. Eugene Streicher, Dr. Irwin Feinberg, Dr. Louis Sokoloff, Dr. Virgil "Ben" Carlson and Dr. James Birren.

had three purposes: to promote research relating to the cause, diagnosis and treatment of neuropsychiatric disorders; to grant individual fellowships and institutional grants to train mental health personnel; and to provide financial aid to states for the formation or improvement of community mental health services, clinics and treatment centers.

When President Harry Truman signed the act on July 3, 1946, the institute had been renamed the National Institute of Mental Health to reflect a broader and more optimistic mission of promoting mental health and combating mental illness. While the act appropriated funds for the erection and equipment of hospital and laboratory facilities, it was not until 3 years later, on Apr. 15, 1949, that funding was obtained to carry out the institute's program, leading the PHS's Division of Mental Hygiene to be abolished in favor of an NIMH administratively joined to the National Institutes of Health. Developed with the philosophy that the



Scientist emeritus Dr. Julius Axelrod (l), who was in NIMH's Laboratory of Clinical Science, chats with Dr. Irwin Kopin, formerly of the same lab, and subsequently NINDS scientific director.

government should provide scientists the maximum amount of freedom and not hamper their progress by directing or regimenting their activities, the creation of NIMH marked the beginning of the federal government's large-scale support of research in mental health.

The need to supplement and expand the PHS's existing research programs to tackle the country's major causes of crippling and disability led Congress to establish the National Institute of Neurological Diseases and Blindness (NINDB, the predecessor of today's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, or NINDS) on Nov. 22, 1950. Because no funds and staff were available for the new institute's operation during its first year, the surgeon general designated NIMH to administer the NINDB's intramural program. Dr. Seymour Kety was appointed scientific director of the joint institutes' basic research program; the neurological and blindness research that had, until then, been supported by NIMH and NIH's Division of Research Grants, were transferred to NINDB's intramural program.

Laboratories and branches were established along disciplinary rather than disease-oriented lines. The intramural research program continued to emphasize a broad and multidisciplinary approach to basic and clinical research throughout the 1950s until the joint NIMH-NINDB basic research program was separated and each institute developed its own basic research program in 1960.—Ingrid Farreras ■

Study of Dystonia

Researchers at NIH are conducting a study to determine if amlodipine can improve the effects of botulinum toxin injections for individuals with cervical or focal hand dystonia. Call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY: 1-866-411-1010). ■



Training Branch Class Offerings

The Training and Development Branch supports the development of NIH human resources through consultation and provides training, career development programs and other services designed to enhance organizational performance. For more information call 496-6211 or visit <http://LearningSource.od.nih.gov>.

Critical Thinking	5/15
Supervising Former Peers	5/15
Purchase Card Training	5/19
Foreign Travel	5/19-20
Delegated Acquisition Training Program	5/20-23
Speaking On the Job Part I: Improving Voice Quality	5/20-21
Strategic Thinking	5/20-21
The Professional Office Manager II	5/20-21
Electronic Presentations: Using Powerpoint ABCs	5/20
Giving Dynamic Presentations for Women in Science	5/21-22
Introduction to MS Excel 2000	5/21
NBS Travel System	5/21-22
Managing Upward	5/22
English Pronunciation for non-Native Speaker	5/22
Retreats	5/23

CIT Computer Classes

All courses are given without charge. For more information call 594-6248 or consult the training program's home page at <http://training.cit.nih.gov>.

OS X Tips and Tricks	5/15
NCBI's Making Sense of DNA and Protein Sequences	5/15
Introduction to Requirement Lifecycle Management	5/16
Looking Ahead to nVision	5/19
Web Writing for NIH Science	5/20
Active Directory at NIH for Network Administrators and Developers	5/21
What's New in PowerPoint 2002?	5/21
Security in the Application Development Lifecycle	5/22
What's New in Outlook 2002?	5/22
Designing Effective Scientific Slides	5/22
Solving Problems w/Software You Already Have	5/22
PowerPoint Topics: Graphs, Links and More	5/28
Statistical Analysis of Microarray Data	5/30

Volunteers Needed

Doctors at NIH are seeking individuals being treated with a widely-used anti-depressant agent called welbutrin. Participants will be asked to donate 4 tablespoons of blood for routine screening and evaluation of platelet function. The visit will be no longer than an hour and compensation is provided. If interested or for more information call Donna Jo McCloskey, research nurse, at 496-5150. ■

Wednesday Afternoon Lectures

The Wednesday Afternoon Lecture series—held on its namesake day at 3 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10—features Nobel laureate (1995) Dr. Eric F. Wieschaus on May 21, speaking on the topic, "From Long-term Gradients to Local Cell Shape Changes: How the *Drosophila* Embryo Controls Its Morphogenesis." He is Squibb professor of molecular biology and HHMI investigator at Princeton University.

On May 28, Dr. Richard M. Locksley, Sandler professor, departments of medicine and microbiology/immunology and director, Sandler Center for Basic Research in Asthma, and HHMI investigator, University of California, San Francisco, will present "Tracking Immunity *In Vivo*."

For more information or for reasonable accommodation, call Hilda Madine, 594-5595.

Orient Yourself to NIH via Computer

The Training and Development Branch, OD, has launched an NIH Online Orientation program that delivers a wealth of information about NIH. In addition to a broad overview of the NIH mission and history, the orientation includes a campus tour, pay and benefits facts, and information about staff rights and responsibilities. The program contains links to many resources that will assist new staff in becoming acquainted with NIH. New staff will be required to complete the program within 3 weeks of their arrival. But even if you already work here, you will find that the program is informative and useful. Bookmark the site for future reference.

The NIH Online Orientation can be found at <http://orientation.nih.gov>. ■

FEW Brown Bag Set, May 13

Federally Employed Women, Bethesda chapter, will host Toy Taira, president of Potomac Change Management and co-author of *Managing in the Age of Change*, at a brown bag meeting on Tuesday, May 13 from noon to 1 p.m. in Bldg. 31, Rm. 6C6. Taira's presentation, "You and Your Organization—How to Overcome Obstacles," will advise on working through personal and professional changes and acquiring new growth skills. All are welcome to attend. Sign language interpreters will be provided. For other reasonable accommodation, contact Allyson Browne, 451-0002, or via Federal Relay, 1-800-877-8339. ■

Is Lupus Disrupting Your Life?

Take part in a medical research study at the National Institutes of Health. For more information, call 1-800-411-1222 (TTY 1-866-411-1010). ■

Female Smokers Needed

Female volunteers age 18 and older are needed to participate in a study being conducted at American University. The study is investigating mood, smoking and food craving. Compensation is provided. If interested call (240) 994-0268.

Inn Expansion Benefits from Morella Tribute

The capital expansion fund for the Children's Inn at NIH recently received a \$25,000 donation on behalf of former congressional Rep. Connie Morella (R-Md.), who visited the inn on Apr. 22 for a formal check presentation. Also among the more than two dozen people attending the event were NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni, Clinical Center director Dr. John Gallin and several members of the inn board of directors.

PHOTOS: BILL BRANSON



Zerhouni greets Morella at inn.

"Connie and Tony Morella have given so much of themselves to the inn, both personally and professionally," said Dr. Lori Wiener, president of the inn's board of directors. "You're giving us a gift, but you have always been a gift to us."

The donation represents proceeds from a tribute dinner held in Morella's honor at Indian Springs Country Club. More than 1,200 local business leaders, friends and other supporters wanted to thank her for her dedicated service and lifelong contributions to the region. Morella suggested that any additional funds from the dinner be donated to the inn. She spent 8 terms over 16 years in Congress representing the district in which NIH is located and was a fixture at major NIH and inn milestones. In addition, her husband, Tony, has served on the inn board of directors since October 1994.



Morella thanks supporters for generosity to inn.

Thanking her supporters for the tribute dinner and commending NIH and inn officials for the concept of the inn and its thriving success, Morella remarked, "It has been said that



At the Children's Inn for a check presentation are (from l) Mary Ann Estey, Morella's longtime assistant and a chief organizer of the tribute dinner; former Rep. Connie Morella; Dr. Lori Wiener, president of the inn board of directors; Tyrrell Flawn, inn executive director; and NIH director Dr. Elias Zerhouni. Below, construction of the inn expansion is well under way.



when you touch a rock, you touch the past. When you touch a flower, you touch the present. But when you touch a child, you touch the future." ■

NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Program

This year, the NIH Asian/Pacific Islander American Heritage Program will celebrate its 31st anniversary. Everyone is invited to join in the festivities, which consist of two lunchtime programs on May 16 and 30, respectively.

On Friday, May 16, from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on the Bldg. 31A patio, there will be sales of food from China, India, Japan, Korea, the Philippines and Thailand. In addition, the event will feature a bonsai exhibition, demonstrations of calligraphy, floral arrangement (Ikebana), self-defense techniques by the NIH Tae Kwon Do School and a performance of the Chinese Lion Dance by the Tai Yim Kung Fu School.

Two weeks later, on Friday, May 30, there will be a program of classical Cambodian, Indian and Japanese and Korean music and dances from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. A reception will be held after the music program. Details of the program will be provided in the next *NIH Record*.

Also on May 30, Dr. Michael M.C. Lai, distinguished professor of molecular microbiology and immunology, Keck School of Medicine, University of Southern California, will present a seminar on "SARS: What Have We Learned from 30 Years of Coronavirus Research?" This will be held from 3 to 4 p.m. in Bldg. 4, Conf. Rm. 433, sponsored by the NIH-FDA Chinese American Association.

Sponsors of the events include the Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management, the Asian/Pacific Islander American committees, the R&W and the NIH Federal Credit Union. For information on reasonable accommodation, contact Charly Wells, 496-6301. Sign language interpretation will be provided. For more information contact Victor Fung, 435-3504, email vf6n@nih.gov.