

nih record



ABOVE • Visitors from the Embassy of Japan taught the art of origami at the Children's Inn recently. See story on p. 2.

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A Day On, Not a Day Off

King Observance Is a Call to Service

On Jan. 11, the NIH community took time to reflect on the life and legacy of the man known as the “drum major” of the civil rights movement. If Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., were alive today, he would be celebrating his 82nd birthday.

The observance featured performances by young musicians from the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz and a keynote address by NIH grantee Dr. Cato Laurencin, dean of the School of Medicine and vice president for health affairs at the University of Connecticut.

NIH director Dr. Francis Collins welcomed attendees and encouraged them to see the observance as a call to service throughout the year. “What are you doing for others?” he said, echoing King’s challenge. To do the work of biomedical and clinical research, Collins said one must have what King described as “a tough mind and a tender heart.”

Laurencin addressed both the progress that the United States has achieved since the dawn of the civil rights movement and the work still needed to strengthen our communities and our nation.



Dr. Cato Laurencin

SEE KING DAY, PAGE 6

Earth Day 2011 May Bring ‘Them’ to NIH

The holidays have passed, some snow has fallen and much of the natural world seems asleep. But the Office of Research Facilities’ Division of Environmental Protection and the IC Green Teams are already busy planning for a big event—not a blizzard, but Earth Day. This year, NIH will celebrate it concurrently with Take Your Child to Work Day on Thursday, Apr. 28.

It is also time to reveal some clues about the mystery creature or plant featured in ORF’s annual Earth Day “Name It Contest.” Each year “It” has been an organism, sometimes threatened or endangered, that has something to do with medicine and emphasizes the importance to NIH’s mission of protecting biodiversity.

In the first years of the contest, the mystery organisms were from far-off lands—*Hoodia* and *Sceletium* plants from the Great Karoo in southern Africa, *Moringa* trees from the foothills of the Himalayas in northwestern India and Gila monsters from Arizona. Last year brought the first “It” native to our own neigh-

SEE EARTH DAY, PAGE 4

Peer Review Undergoes ‘Evergreening’ Process

By Manju Subramanya

Recruiting scientists to review grant applications is no easy task. Zeroing in on expertise and then arranging schedules convenient for all can be both daunting and time-consuming for the scientific review officer (SRO) charged with this undertaking.

But what if sophisticated text-mining tools helped the SRO identify the right reviewers more efficiently? What if the calendar-scheduling software used by NIAID could be leveraged for use by SROs at other institutes and centers?

These and other “pain points” in the business of conducting peer review at NIH were discussed as part of a broad effort called “evergreening peer review” initiated by the Office of Extramural Research’s electronic Research Administration (eRA). This task brought together 56 people from 15 ICs in 2-hour, twice weekly sessions held from February to

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Olympian Crear To Give DDM Seminar

The Deputy Director for Management (DDM) announces the second DDM seminar of the 2010-2011 series "Management and Science: Partnering for Excellence." The event on Thursday, Feb. 17 from 11 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10, will feature Dr. Mark Crear, two-time Olympian and expert on resilience, leadership and peak performance. His topic, "Staying In the Zone...by Maintaining a Winning Team Attitude," will address building and maintaining self-motivation, improving team cohesion and developing a championship attitude.

Videocasting and sign language will be provided. Individuals who need reasonable accommodation to attend should call (301) 496-6211 or the Federal Relay Service at 1-800-877-8339. For more information about the DDM Seminar Series, visit www.ddmseries.od.nih.gov or call (301) 496-3271.

NHGRI Symposium Foreshadows Next Decade Of Genomics Research

A day-long scientific symposium hosted by NHGRI on Friday, Feb. 11 will provide NIH staff and the wider scientific community a glimpse into contemporary genomics research. February 2011 marks the 10th anniversary of the publication of the draft sequence of the human genome in the journal *Nature*. Now, a decade later, *Nature* will publish NHGRI's new strategic plan for the field of genomics—Charting a Course for Genomic Medicine from Base Pairs to Bedside—which describes a vision for the next 10 years of genomic research.

The symposium, titled "A Decade with the Human Genome Sequence: Charting a Course for Genomic Medicine," will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Kirschstein Auditorium, Bldg. 45. It will feature key participants in the field of genomics including NIH director Dr. Francis Collins; Dr. Eric Lander, director of the Broad Institute at MIT and Harvard; and Dr. Maynard Olson, professor emeritus of genome sciences and medicine, University of Washington.

Amy Harmon, the *New York Times* reporter who won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize for her series "The DNA Age," will also be a speaker. NHGRI founding director Dr. James D. Watson, who won the Nobel Prize for co-discovering the double-helical structure of DNA, will participate in a panel discussion moderated by Sharon Terry, president and CEO of the Genetic Alliance.

"While significant challenges remain for under-

standing all the complexities of the human genome, it is gratifying to see the spectacular genomic discoveries that have occurred in the past decade. Such advances will usher in the era of genomic medicine," said NHGRI director Dr. Eric Green.

In addition to the talks in Kirschstein Auditorium, NHGRI will webcast the symposium and will operate an open microblog (similar to Twitter) during the event. For a full description of the symposium, including the agenda and presenter biographies, visit www.genome.gov/Symposium2011.

Inn Needs Facilities Assistant

The Children's Inn at NIH is currently recruiting for a part-time facilities assistant to work 4 weekday mornings per week (approximately 20 hours). Requires 3 years experience in maintenance and repairs, including finish carpentry and light plumbing skills. Spanish speaking ability is a plus. Must have good skills in basic computer functions, including email. Visit www.childrensinn.org for the complete job description. Interested candidates should submit a cover letter and resume to Tammy Pinson at pinsont@mail.nih.gov.



Japanese Delegation Visits Inn

A delegation from the Japanese Embassy visited the Children's Inn at NIH on Jan. 6 and spent an hour making origami with youngsters. Airi Maehara, the wife of Japan's Minister of Foreign Affairs Seiji Maehara, is shown above with inn guest Feiyn Chen, 11, of China. In the photo at right, she helps Philip "PJ" Bethel, 4, of the Bahamas with his origami. In addition to Maehara, the Japanese ambassador's wife, Yoriko Fujisaka, visited with families.



PHOTOS: IZUMI SWARTS

NIAMS Awareness Day Congressional Aides See NIAMS Scientists in Action

Congressional staffers recently toured the intramural laboratories at the National Institute of Arthritis and Musculoskeletal and Skin Diseases where they learned firsthand about cutting-edge technology and research advances that have led to significant improvements in patient outcomes. The tour was organized in part by the NIAMS Coalition, a group of more than 70 professional and voluntary organizations.

The Hill staffers were greeted by a number of institute leaders and scientists including Dr. Stephen Katz, NIAMS director, who provided a general overview of the mission and structure of NIH. "We have been trying on many fronts to educate the public in terms of not only what we do at the NIAMS, but also what we do at the NIH," he said. "It was an excellent opportunity to have the staffers visit and gain an appreciation of how the decisions made here impact local universities and academic health centers."

The group also heard from Dr. John O'Shea, NIAMS scientific director, about the recent research breakthroughs and opportunities currently under way in the NIAMS intramural program as well as an overview of the new NIH Center for Regenerative Medicine that will focus on induced pluripotent stem cells.

The staffers also toured the NIAMS light imaging section led by Dr. Evelyn Ralston and the Laboratory of Muscle Stem Cells and Gene Regulation led by Dr. Vittorio Sartorelli. Both labs feature new equipment obtained using funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act.

Ralston demonstrated how advanced light imaging equipment can help researchers better understand skeletal muscle cell biology. According to her, the NIAMS microscope facilities "are to a classroom microscope what a smartphone is to an old rotary phone."

Sartorelli highlighted the latest technology for sequencing the human genome and explained how quickly the scientific capabilities have evolved. "The sequencing of the human genome took 10 years and cost \$3 billion," he said. "This present technology allows us to sequence the human genome in 3 to 4 days for less than \$40,000."

The group then saw how these state-of-the-art technologies enable groundbreaking treatment strategies on the translational research portion of the tour. Dr. Raphaela Goldbach-Mansky, from the NIAMS Pediatric Transla-



While touring NIAMS laboratories, congressional staffers heard from Dr. Vittorio Sartorelli (r) about how advanced technologies such as those that enable quick analysis of the human genome provide insight towards the understanding and treatment of disease.

tional Research Branch, illustrated the work she and her colleagues have conducted regarding the genetic understanding of the recently discovered diseases called NOMID (neonatal-onset multisystem inflammatory disease) and DIRA (deficiency of the interleukin-1 receptor antagonist). Their work has dramatically improved the lives of pediatric patients who have disabling, and often life-threatening, conditions characterized by swelling of the brain, joint abnormalities, debilitating rashes and chronic pain.

Dr. Massimo Gadina, from the NIAMS translational immunology section, who collaborates with Goldbach-Mansky, showed participants how the discoveries in his lab further enhance patient diagnosis and outcomes. After Goldbach-Mansky sees a child who is suffering from an unidentified disease, Gadina studies the youngster at the molecular level.

"We get the samples in the morning," he said, "and by late afternoon we are able to tell Dr. Goldbach-Mansky, 'The protein is not there, the RNA is not there...we knew right away that something was up.'"

The half-day event was well received by the staffers, who represented seven different congressional offices. Todd Adams, health legislative assistant for Rep. James R. Langevin (D-RI), said, "It was a pleasure meeting the various scientific directors and having the opportunity to visit the labs. In addition to seeing the practical application of Recovery Act and other investments at work, the tour helped underscore how cross-collaborative biomedical research can translate into real patient outcomes. I look forward to hearing more out of NIAMS in the future." 🗣️

USAID's Shah To Give Rescheduled Barmes Lecture

United States Agency for International Development Administrator Rajiv Shah will present the 2010 David E. Barmes Global Health Lecture on Tuesday, Feb. 15 at 11 a.m. in Masur Auditorium, Bldg. 10. The event was rescheduled from December.

The lecture, titled "Addressing Grand Challenges: The Role of Science in Global Health Development," will include details of USAID's new approach, tailored to support President Obama's vision for high-impact global development, announced by the White House in September. NIH director Dr. Francis Collins will give opening remarks.

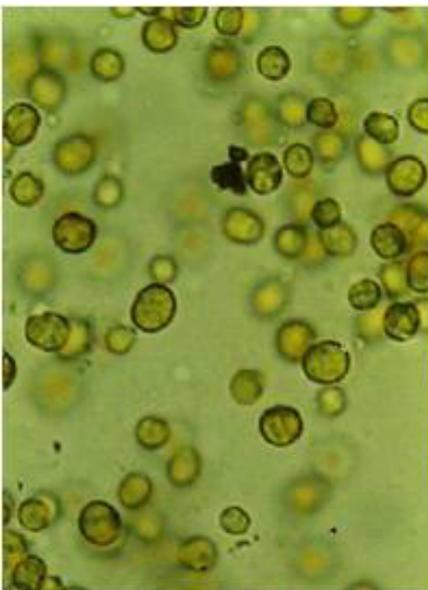
The lecture series honors the late David Edward Barmes, special expert for international health at NIDCR. The talk will be videocast at <http://videocast.nih.gov/>. For more information, visit www.fic.nih.gov/news/events/index.htm.

EARTH DAY

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It, a host for Them



Care to guess what They are?

PHOTOS: RUSSELL KERR, UNIVERSITY OF PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

borhood—the pawpaw tree—and many correct answers to the contest web site. (Some pawpaw seedlings may be back at ORF’s event this year as gifts that you can plant in your yard).

Here are some clues about “It” for this year’s contest, offered by It itself:

▲ I will end the pattern of past years because I don’t come from the land at all. In fact you’ll need to use scuba gear to visit my home.

▲ Many studies have shown that some of the most important drugs discovered in plants and other natural products are actually produced by symbiotic organisms living with the host organism (me). Sometimes my guests just don’t get the credit they deserve. So maybe to be more ecologically correct this competition should be called NIH’s “Name Them Contest.”

▲ Rest assured that I never attack people like those poor irradiated ants portrayed in the 1954 sci-fi movie about Them.

▲ To tell my story a much bigger cast of characters is involved—a whole ecosystem.

▲ When we are all working well together I can produce an array of potent anti-inflammatory, anti-proliferative and analgesic compounds that may help treat a wide range of human diseases including asthma, arthritis, psoriasis, transplant rejection and poison ivy to name just a few. Maybe even cosmetic ingredients to fix your wrinkles.

▲ When environmental conditions deteriorate and ocean temperatures rise with climate change, our numbers drop, reefs get bleached and the whole ecosystem can collapse. Unfortunately, that’s happening worldwide. If you attend NIH’s Earth Day you can learn about things to do to help protect us.

▲ Only the scientific names for me and my close associates in the photos will be accepted. Our identity will be made known in a future *NIH Record* article.

Submit your guess on the identity of “It” to green@mail.nih.gov. All entries must be submitted by Tuesday, Mar. 1 to be eligible for prizes.

From a list of those submitting correct answers, the Division of Environmental Protection will randomly select winners for prizes provided by R&W; winners will be announced at the Earth Day event.

Meanwhile, consider volunteering your green ideas, time and talents to the Earth Day planning committee. If interested, contact Danita Broadnax at broadnaxd@mail.nih.gov.

A full list of Earth Day activities will soon be posted at <http://nems.nih.gov>. Plan to attend and see “It” (or Them) up close.—Ed Rau

Tosten Named CSR Executive Officer

Timothy J. Tosten is the new executive officer at the Center for Scientific Review. He will oversee staff and contractors who provide administrative, financial management, committee management, information technology, procurement and management analysis services.



Each year, CSR receives about 80,000 grant applications, uses more than 17,000 reviewers and hosts more than 1,700 review meetings, which require over 60,000 hotel rooms and travel reimbursements.

“Tim rapidly rose to the top of the candidates to take on this critical job,” said CSR director Dr. Toni Scarpa. “He brings to CSR dynamic and proven management skills and a strong commitment to service.” He said Tosten has “excelled in progressive leadership positions at NIH since he entered the Presidential Management Intern program in 1993.”

Tosten comes to CSR from the Fogarty International Center, where he was executive officer. He earlier served as associate director for administration for the Division of Intramural Research Programs at the National Institute of Mental Health.

He began his NIH career as a PMI in the Office of Research Services, where he spent 12 years working in various areas including managing the child care programs and food service contracts, the NIH travel contract and NIH’s first-ever sign language interpreting services contract. He completed his tenure at ORS as director of the Division of Employee Services.

Tosten holds a master of public administration degree from the University of Baltimore.



Dr. Gwen Collman leads a division that is organized into seven branches and centers, composed of 60 employees, awarding approximately 874 research grants each year for a total of approximately \$388 million. In the scientific world, Dr. Richard Woychik has achieved renown for using molecular genetics to identify and study genes involved in a variety of human disorders.

Two Named to NIEHS Leadership Positions

NIEHS/NTP director Dr. Linda Birnbaum recently filled two key positions on her leadership team with the appointments of Dr. Gwen Collman as director of the Division of Extramural Research and Training (DERT) and Dr. Richard Woychik as the institute's deputy director.

"Dr. Collman and Dr. Woychik bring a wealth of scientific expertise and administrative experience to these important leadership positions of the NIEHS," Birnbaum said. "I have every confidence in their ability to do an extraordinary job in forwarding the scientific interests of the institute."

Collman plans to build on her career at NIEHS where she began as an epidemiologist in the institute's Epidemiology Branch following completion of her doctorate in environmental epidemiology at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Public Health in 1984. In 1992, she moved to DERT as a scientific program administrator.

In 2003, Collman became chief of DERT's Susceptibility and Population Health Branch, a post she held until being named acting director of the division in 2008.

Woychik was most recently president and chief executive officer of the Jackson Laboratory, headquartered in Bar Harbor, Me., with more than 1,400 employees. Previously, he served as scientific officer for Lynx Therapeutics, head of the Parke-Davis laboratory of molecular genetics and professor within the departments of pediatrics, genetics and pharmacology at Case

Western Reserve University. Woychik worked his way up through the ranks over the course of 10 years to become head of the mammalian genetics section in the biology division and then director of the Office of Functional Genomics at Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

A leading mammalian geneticist with more than 80 publications and many honors to his credit, Woychik earned his Ph.D. in molecular biology at Case Western. During his 9-year tenure at the Jackson Laboratory, the institution grew significantly and its total operating budget almost doubled. 🗨️

Fogarty Hosts U.K. Global Health Advocate

Global health advocate Lord Nigel Crisp will visit NIH Feb. 24 to give a talk on the importance of capacity building in the developing world. He is co-chair of the Global Health Workforce Alliance and former chief executive of the U.K. National Health Service. His talk, sponsored by the Fogarty International Center, is titled "Improving Health Care at Home and Abroad: Lessons from the Developing World." The event will be held at 11 a.m. in Bldg. 31C, Conf. Rm. 6.

Crisp is a member of the U.K. House of Lords and works extensively in the fields of international development and global health. From 2000 to 2006, he led major reforms of the British health system as both chief executive of the National Health Service and permanent secretary of the U.K. Department of Health. In 2007, he co-chaired an international task force on increasing the education and training of health workers globally.

His book *Turning the World Upside Down: The Search for Global Health in the 21st Century* stresses the need for co-development and mutual learning instead of traditional top-down approaches to knowledge transfer and international development.

In 2009, he co-founded the Zambia U.K. Health Workforce Alliance, an organization dedicated to increasing the number of Zambian health workers trained in-country. For 20 years, he has been involved with the nonprofit group Sight-savers, which provides eye care training for community health workers in low- and middle-income countries.



Global health advocate Lord Nigel Crisp will visit NIH Feb. 24.



KING DAY

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Above, l:
NIH director Dr. Francis Collins invites the medical research community to use the Martin Luther King, Jr., birthday to “think of ways to give back” to people around us, in volunteer service projects.

Above, r:
Laurencin discusses King’s legacy and the challenges still facing Americans.

Below, l:
Musicians from Thelonious Monk Institute’s Washington, D.C., campus perform. Shown are (from l) pianist Francisco Abate, bassist Callie Fosburgh, saxophonist Gabe Cano, drummer Rony Johnson, guitarist Vincent Femia and trumpeter Eric McMillan (teacher).

PHOTOS: MICHAEL SPENCER

A day to honor King is an opportunity, he said, to reflect on the remarkable progress that black Americans have made through paths of individual and collective determination. It is also an occasion to recognize the great challenges still facing Americans. King’s legacy, he declared, signifies an ongoing duty to eliminate racial disparities.

Laurencin expressed concern over the state of emergency that disproportionately affects black youth, particularly males; statistics reveal a triad pattern of imprisonment, drug abuse and disparity in health care delivery. Recent legislation promoting fairer sentencing and improved health care access demonstrates a commitment from politicians, he said, but progress must come through widespread, multifaceted efforts.

Laurencin underscored King’s observation, “Of all the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane.” Even when it is not deliberately intended, bias leads to differences in health care access and delivery, he said. He cited an Institute of Medicine study, “Unequal Treatment: Confronting Racial and Ethnic Disparities in Health Care,” but also

praised last year’s passage of health care legislation and the elevation of the National Center for Minority Health and Health Disparities to institute status as significant steps toward healing racial health disparities. However, the situation remains “like a bridge unfinished.”

Laurencin echoed King’s hopeful reminder that one person acting courageously can make a difference: “Never underestimate the power of one.” As a participant in the Million Man March in 1995, Laurencin was among those who were asked each to hand a one-dollar bill to another bystander, who would pass the dollar to a distant collection point. He was struck by the resulting generosity, trust and cooperation demonstrated by strangers when a large amount of money was collected. Laurencin asserted that working collectively is essential to everyone because, as King said, “Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”

The event was sponsored by the NIH Office of Equal Opportunity and Diversity Management and its NIH Black Employment Program.—
Kate Saylor



At NIH’s annual MLK Day observance, vocalist coach Lori Williams of the Monk Institute, accompanied by Femia, sings in the bebop style popularized by Monk.

digest

Study Uncovers Pathway Critical for UV-Induced Melanoma

Scientists have made an unanticipated discovery in mice that interferon-gamma, a type of protein primarily used by the immune system for intercellular communication, acts as a promoter for the deadly form of skin cancer known as melanoma. This finding resulted from a series of experiments designed to understand how solar ultraviolet (UV) radiation causes melanoma.

Results of this study suggest that interferon-gamma, which has been thought to contribute to an innate defense system against cancer, under some circumstances may promote melanoma and incite the development of tumors. The work, led by Dr. Glenn Merlino of NCI's Laboratory of Cancer Biology and Genetics and research fellow and first author Dr. M. Raza Zaidi, appeared online Jan. 19 in *Nature*. Cutaneous melanoma is a highly aggressive and frequently drug-resistant cancer with rising incidence rates. The major environmental risk factor for melanoma is UV radiation exposure, usually from the sun, with the highest risk associated with intermittent burning doses, especially during childhood.

Over the past 10 years, the researchers used genetically engineered mice first to prove, and then to try to understand, the connection between exposure to UV radiation and the initiation of melanoma. The current work was the latest attempt to define the molecular mechanisms of this cause and effect relationship. The results of this study offer the possibility that the inhibition of interferon-gamma immediately after sunburn might block the carcinogenic activation of the skin's pigment-producing cells, known as melanocytes, making it a potentially effective preventive strategy against UV radiation-induced melanoma, according to the scientists.

Rebooting the Brain Helps Stop the Ring of Tinnitus

NIH-funded researchers were able to eliminate tinnitus in a group of rats by stimulating a nerve in the neck while simultaneously playing a variety of sound tones over an extended period of time, says a study published Jan. 12 in the advance online edition of *Nature*. The hallmark

of tinnitus is often a persistent ringing in the ears that is annoying for some, debilitating for others and currently incurable. Similar to pressing a reset button in the brain, this new therapy was found to help retrain the part of the brain that interprets sound so that errant neurons reverted back to their original state and the ringing disappeared. The research was conducted by scientists from the University of Texas at Dallas and MicroTransponder Inc. NIDCD funded a large part of the research.

Tinnitus is a symptom some people experience as a result of hearing loss. When sensory cells in the inner ear are damaged, such as from loud noise, the resulting hearing loss changes some of the signals sent from the ear to the brain. For reasons that are not fully understood, some people will develop tinnitus as a result.

New Technology Peeks Deep into the Brain

Changes within deep regions of the brain can now be visualized at the cellular level, based on NIH-funded research on mice. Published online in the Jan. 16 *Nature Medicine*, the study used a groundbreaking technique to explore cellular-level changes over a period of weeks within deep brain regions, providing a level of detail not possible with previously available methods. NIDA, NCI and NINDS supported the study. Researchers at Stanford University used time-lapse fluorescence microendoscopy, a technique that uses miniature probes to directly visualize specific cells over a period of time, to explore structural changes that occur in neurons as a result of tumor formation and increased stimulation in the mouse brain. This could lead to greater information on how the brain adapts to changing situations, including repeated drug exposure.

"Continued drug use leads to changes in neuronal circuits that are evident well after a person stops taking an addictive substance," said NIDA director Dr. Nora Volkow. "This study demonstrates an innovative technique that allows for a glimpse of these cellular changes within the brain regions implicated in drug reward, providing an important tool in our understanding and treatment of addiction."—
compiled by Carla Garnett



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PEER REVIEW

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July 2010. The initiative had two goals: gain efficiencies that will help NIH review staff in their daily work and provide input to redesign the peer review electronic systems that support their work.

“There have been a lot of changes in review at NIH as a result of the Enhancing Peer Review initiative,” said Dr. Paul Sheehy of NIGMS, co-leader of the initiative with Dr. Sheryl Brining of NCRR. “This is an effort to not only keep pace with the changes, but also get ahead of them by designing business systems we would like to have.”

“Since peer review is at the heart of the grants process, we needed everyone to step back and take a look at the entire process,” noted Pete Morton, eRA program manager.

eRA’s IMPAC II grants administration systems are more than 20 years old. The evergreening group’s recommendations will

allow eRA to develop the detailed requirements for new peer review electronic support systems and, based on future funding, build the new system. “This is a wonderful example of information technology not leading the business process, but customers leading the way with IT standing by them,” Morton said.

The brainstorming, which builds on work initiated in 2006 by the NIH Office of the Chief Information Officer, resulted in the mapping of a 20-foot-long model of the peer review workflow from an SRO’s perspective. The new model has many purposes, including serving as a teaching tool for new SROs and to better inform eRA architects and analysts how any planned change to the system may impact other parts of the workflow.

Dr. Carla Walls, an SRO at NICHD, described the discussions as both rewarding and informa-

tive. “I see many benefits arising from the model,” she noted. “It can be a roadmap for developing a peer review training program to promote more efficiency and uniformity in review and spur helpful discussions between review and program staff about what’s involved in the review process from start to finish.”

Morton noted that the success of the effort demonstrated that the business process modeling approach could also be used for other major

“This is a wonderful example of information technology not leading the business process, but customers leading the way with IT standing by them.”

initiatives involving complex systems at NIH.

The initiative also culminated in a 56-page white paper that details the modeling process, the pain points and the recommendations.

“The evergreening peer review model gives us, for the first time, a complete picture of our business process and shows us the complexities associated with changing the system,” said Brining. “We are better poised to support policy changes now.”

“And to rebuild the eRA IT systems that support peer review,” added Morton. 🗳️

Black History Month Program Set, Feb. 10

NIH’s annual Black History Month observance will be held on Thursday, Feb. 10 from 11 a.m. to noon in Kirschstein Auditorium, Bldg. 45. This year’s theme is “African Americans and the Civil War.” Royce Kinniebrew, president of the Kinniebrew Group, will be the guest speaker.

In addition to working in Civil War combat, African Americans also performed duties as physicians, nurses, scouts and spies. As the nation commemorates the 150th anniversary of the start of the Civil War, learn more about these individuals who were instrumental in the effort to abolish slavery and preserve the Union.

The Kinniebrew Group mission is to introduce public and private sector audiences to past and present contributions and achievements of black people throughout the world.

An ethnic food sampling will be available following the program. Sign language interpreters will be provided. For reasonable accommodation or more information, contact Jesse Burnett at (301) 496-7478 or via email, or call the Federal Relay Service at (800) 877-8339.



Standing in front of the peer review model are (from front to back) Dr. Sheryl Brining, NCRR, and Dr. Paul Sheehy, NIGMS, co-leads of the evergreening peer review initiative, and eRA’s Mike Rennolds, a business analyst who led the modeling effort.



milestones



OD's Kramer Retires After 31 Years

Dr. Barnett "Barry" Kramer, director of the Office of Disease Prevention within OD, retired from federal service Dec. 3 after 31 years in the government, 24 of which were spent at NIH.

Kramer, who spent many years working at the National Cancer Institute in a variety of positions including deputy director of NCI's Division of Cancer Prevention and Control (now the Division of Cancer Prevention), is also editor-in-chief of the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute*, a post he has held since 1994 and in which he will continue. The journal is owned by Oxford University Press and is not connected with the federal government.

Board-certified in internal medicine and medical oncology, Kramer began his career with NCI in 1975 as a clinical associate in the Pediatric Oncology Branch after earning his medical degree from the University of Maryland Medical School and completing an internship and residency in internal medicine at Barnes Hospital in St. Louis. After 8 years on the faculty of the University of Florida College of Medicine in Gainesville, he returned to NIH.

Upon his return, he began work as a senior investigator at NCI's Navy Medical Oncology Branch and then moved to the NCI Division of Cancer Prevention and Control, first as associate director and then as deputy director. In 2000, he was selected as director of the Office of Medical Applications of Research and, since 2001, he also served as NIH associate director for disease prevention and director of the Office of Disease Prevention.

In 1986, Kramer also became an associate professor and subsequently a full professor in the department of medicine at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. For nearly 20 years, he has also been editor-in-chief of the screening and prevention editorial board

of NCI's Physicians Data Query (PDQ), a comprehensive cancer database. He also is a longstanding member of the PDQ adult treatment editorial board.

During his years at NIH, he received a Meritorious Executive Award, an NIH Merit Award, two NIH Director's Awards, an HHS Secretary's Award for Distinguished Service and has given both a Daniel Ihde Memorial (NCI) Lecture and an NIH Great Teachers Lecture.

Kramer also holds a master's degree in public health from Johns Hopkins University's Bloomberg School of Public Health.

In addition to continuing his work with *JNCI* during retirement, Kramer will do contract work for NCI's Office of Communications and Education.—**Valerie Lambros**

NIAID's Nadler Mourned

Dr. Jeffrey P. Nadler, who was deputy director and then acting director of the Therapeutics Research Program in NIAID's Division of AIDS from 2006 until July 2010, died in hospice care on Nov. 26 at his home in St. Petersburg, Fla. He was 60 years old.

Nadler came to NIH from the University of South Florida College of Medicine, where he served for 19 years, most recently as a professor of medicine and public health and director of research in the division of infectious disease. During his tenure there, he oversaw clinical trials that helped lead to the development of more than 20 antiretroviral drugs for the treatment of HIV infection.

Internationally renowned for his expertise in HIV/AIDS clinical care, Nadler advised U.S. professional societies, the Food and Drug Administration and the governments of India and Brazil on the development of national clinical guidelines for HIV care and practice. He also led groups of fellows to clinics in India and Brazil to deliver care to people with HIV/AIDS.

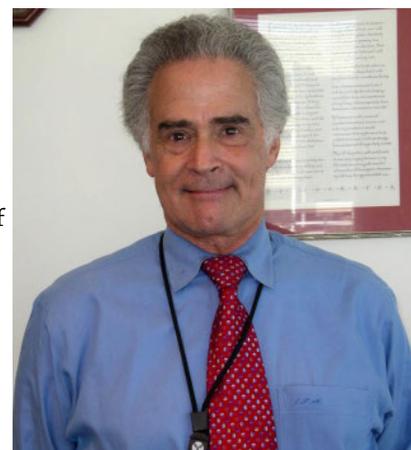
"He believed that everyone deserves the right to a full life," said Dr. Carl Dieffenbach, director of DAIDS. "It doesn't matter whether you're living in India or Brazil or Florida or New York. His philosophy was to make sure that the people he interacted with got the best care available and access to medications that would sustain their lives."

While at NIAID, Nadler worked with the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief program to help it implement treatment of HIV/AIDS in the developing world. He also helped NIAID begin to formulate a new agenda for improving the treatment of tuberculosis in people who are co-infected with HIV and TB.

"He was a very optimistic person," said Dr. Mike Ussery, chief of the Drug Development and Clinical Science Branch, DAIDS. "He was an inspiration to all of us here in the division."

Nadler suffered from spinocerebellar ataxia, an inherited disease that causes wasting of the spinal cord and cerebellum.

He is survived by his wife, Constance Price; his brother, Gary Nadler, his sister, Debra Battino; and his son, Sandro Humann.—**Laura Sivitz Leifman** 



Right:

Participating in NIMH's recent panel on anxiety disorders were (from l) Dr. H. Blair Simpson, Dr. Elizabeth Phelps, Dr. Daniel Pine, NIMH director Dr. Thomas Insel, Dr. Ronald Kessler and Dr. Kerry Ressler.



Panelists Pay Tribute to Pioneer in Anxiety Disorders Research

By Colleen Labbe

Anxiety disorders, characterized by extreme anxiety or fear that makes daily life difficult, are among the most common mental disorders. About one in five people in the United States will be burdened by an anxiety disorder sometime in their life. But 30 years of research and advocacy have led to improved understanding about the disorders and treatment options for those affected.

The results of that research were discussed at a recent symposium sponsored by the National Institute of Mental Health. The event was held in honor of the late Dr. Jerilyn Ross, one of the founders of the Anxiety Disorders Association of America and an advocate for anxiety disorders research and treatment.

NIMH director Dr. Thomas Insel spurred discussion about anxiety disorders from five panelists who discussed studies prompted to a large degree by Ross's accomplishments. They agreed that, like many mental disorders, anxiety disorders tend to start in early life. "It can be hard to understand how crippling these disorders are if you don't have one," said Dr. H. Blair Simpson of Columbia University, who is a clinician as well as a researcher.

"When you talk to adults with anxiety disorders, most will say their problems started when they were kids," said Dr. Daniel Pine, an NIMH intramural scientist who studies the neuroscience associated with anxiety disorders. Although most children who have anxiety tend to grow out of it, the subset that does not will account for the majority of chronic anxiety problems in adults, he explained.

Determining who may grow out of it and who may not is "the \$64,000 question right now," he added. "Research has taught us that if you

are exposed to your fears, you are better able to overcome them. Children with social anxiety who are encouraged to interact with peers at school are often better able to overcome their anxiety."

The group also discussed how neuroscience and the use of brain imaging technologies such as functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI) have improved our understanding of brain disorders. Using fMRI, scientists have been able to pinpoint brain regions involved in developing fear and anxiety such as the amygdala, a small area known as the "fear hub" situated deep inside the brain. In people with anxiety disorders, the amygdala may be overactive or oversensitive.

Genetic studies are also helping identify certain genetic variations that confer risk or resilience in people. By combining our understanding of the neuropathways that mediate fear with our understanding of genetics, we hope to develop and target better treatments—"the sweet spot in the field," noted Dr. Kerry Ressler of Emory University.

The panelists conveyed a collective sense of excitement about the future of anxiety disorder research and treatment. Since Ross began her work in the 1980s, the stigma associated with the disorders has lessened. And psychotherapies, especially cognitive behavioral therapy and exposure therapy, have proven effective for many people. Medications also help many sufferers.

Summing up the session, Insel noted that we now understand that an anxiety disorder likely "has a biological basis, with a psychological cure. It's a very positive picture of how far we've come." 🗨️



The phone numbers for more information about the studies below are 1-866-444-2214 (TTY 1-866-411-1010) unless otherwise noted.

Cholesterol Lowering Study Recruiting

Do you worry about cholesterol? NHLBI is looking for healthy volunteers to participate in a 24-week study to determine whether a fiber supplement can lower cholesterol levels. The study involves three outpatient study visits with a physical exam and a diet and exercise assessment. Your cholesterol levels, HDL, LDL and other laboratory markers will be measured to evaluate the effect of this treatment on cholesterol levels. Participants will alternately receive both a fiber supplement and a placebo (a substance that neither helps nor hurts) during the course of the study. You may be eligible if you are 18 or older and are in good health. All study-related tests and medications will be provided at no cost and compensation may be provided. Call (301) 496-0033 and refer to study 10-H-0088.

Midlife & Menopause Research Studies

Women ages 40-65 who struggle with irritability, anxiety, sadness or loss of enjoyment at the time of the menopause transition are invited to participate in outpatient research studies. There is no cost for participation. Compensation may be provided. Phone (301) 496-9576 and refer to study 88-M-0131.

Study of Neck Pain

Are you a healthy individual with neck pain for 3 months or less? If you are between the ages of 18 and 65, you may be able to participate in a neck pain study and receive a comprehensive cervical musculoskeletal examination. Healthy volunteers are also needed. Email NeckPainStudy@gmail.com or call (301) 451-7514. Refer to study 02-CC-0245.

Postpartum Depression Research Studies

Women ages 18-45 who struggle with postpartum depression or who had PPD in the past are invited to participate in outpatient research studies. There is no cost for participation. Compensation may be provided. Call (301) 496-9576 and refer to study 03-M-0138.

Healthy Volunteers Needed

The Molecular Imaging Branch, NIMH, is looking for healthy volunteers who smoke, with no current or history of psychiatric illness, between the ages of 18 and 65, for a multitude of studies. Studies may include PET scans, MRI, psychological interview, neuropsychological testing and other procedures depending on the project in which you choose to participate. Call (301) 435-8982 for more information.

Weight Management Program

African-American women between the ages of 18 and 60 and free from any major medical conditions/diseases are needed for a study addressing approaches to weight loss and maintenance. Eligible volunteers will receive group counseling for weight management at the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences. Additional compensation may be provided. To see if you qualify or to get more information, call (301) 295-9718.

Two Digestive Disease Experts Join NIDDK

Dr. Averell H. Sherker recently joined NIDDK's Liver Disease Research Branch in the Division of Digestive Diseases and Nutrition as scientific advisor for viral hepatitis and liver diseases. He will provide scientific oversight for liver-related



research grants and NIDDK-funded clinical research networks. He previously directed the Center for Liver Diseases at Washington Hospital Center and hepatology research at McGill University. In addition, he was attending physician in the Liver Transplantation Program at Georgetown University Hospital and continues as associate professor of clinical medicine at Georgetown University School of Medicine. Sherker received his M.D. from Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and trained in medicine, gastroenterology and hepatology at the University of Toronto and in molecular virology at Stanford University and Chiba University in Japan. He coauthored the book *Living With Hepatitis C*.

Dr. Michael Grey is the new director of the gastrointestinal transport and absorption program in NIDDK's Division of Digestive Diseases and Nutrition. He is managing grants aimed at advancing research on nutrient digestion, absorption and transport in



the gastrointestinal tract, as well as the development, structure and function of the intestinal tract in health and disease. Grey was a health science policy analyst in NIDDK's Office of Scientific Program and Policy Analysis. He graduated with honors from Hofstra University where he studied biochemistry and earned a Ph.D. in biochemistry and molecular biophysics from Columbia University. He completed postdoctoral research at Harvard Medical School, where he studied how proteins on the surface of cells transmit molecular signals across the cell membrane.

NICHD Convenes Experts to Launch Institute Vision Process

“Our intent is to identify the most promising scientific opportunities of the next decade across the NICHD’s mission,” said NICHD director Dr. Alan Guttmacher about the first of nine workshops convened to create a scientific vision for the institute. “We’re here to set an ambitious agenda that inspires the NICHD, its partners and the research community to achieve critical scientific goals and meet pressing public health needs.”

At the first workshop, about 60 outside experts from numerous disciplines convened to identify research frontiers in plasticity. Formally defined as something malleable that can be molded or shaped, plasticity has a range of meanings for researchers in the life sciences. For some, plasticity refers to an inherent capacity to adapt to changes in the environment, to heal and recover after an injury. Some researchers specifically target the nervous system’s inherent plasticity to help individuals recover from stroke, other injuries to the head or damage to the spinal cord. Other researchers seek to harness the power of plasticity to help people overcome such problems as learning disabilities or to help young people reach their maximum potential across different developmental stages.

Plasticity is the first of nine broad themes that capture the breadth of science within the NICHD mission. Themes for the remaining workshops to be held by the end of March are development, cognition, behavior, reproduction, pregnancy and pregnancy outcomes, developmental origins of health and disease, environment and diagnostics and therapeutics. The result of each workshop will be a white paper from which NICHD will draft a vision statement that builds upon the most promising opportunities identified across the different themes.

A final scientific conference, expected to take place in June, will bring together a diverse group of external and NIH leaders to discuss and refine the vision statement. During each step of the process, the institute will seek advice and invite public comment through its web site. After a review from its advisory council, the institute plans to publish the final document in a research journal. More information is available at www.nichd.nih.gov/vision/.



“We’re asking you to chart where the research community and the NICHD should be headed over the next 10 years,” Guttmacher told workshop participants. “What will the future look like in key scientific areas? What should we know and what should we be able to do a decade from now that will allow us to address critical unmet knowledge gaps and health needs?”

Guttmacher asked participants to consider which basic, clinical and translational research questions must be answered, what novel research methods and approaches may need to be developed or what unique training and workforce development activities should be pursued to reach the goals.

Once the vision statement is complete, NICHD staff will use it to help guide its work, he said.

In his final remark to the panel, Guttmacher quoted a statement attributed to Chicago architect Daniel Burnham: “Make no little plans; they have no magic to stir [people’s] blood and probably will themselves not be realized. Make big plans; aim high in hope and work, remembering that a noble, logical diagram once recorded will not die.”

NICHD director Dr. Alan Guttmacher speaks at the first of nine workshops convened to create a scientific vision for the institute.