



Scoop

June 18, 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

June

- 21 Faculty Promotion Seminar**, 5:15-6:45 p.m., MSB 2.103. Contact **Juanita Sunday**, 713-500-5103.
- 24 Memorial Hermann Partners in Caring Blood Drive**, 6 a.m. - 6 p.m., Pavilion Conference Center.
- 29 Dr. Jose Carranza**, "Depression, More than Just the Blues," noon, JLL Conference Room street level.

July

- 5 Skeleton holiday.**
- 7 Benefits Brown Bag Session**, noon, MSB 2.006.
- 15 TMC Food Drive Party**, 11 a.m.-1 p.m., Webber Plaza.
- 15 12th Annual UT Scholarship Golf Classic Early Bird Special.** Last day for special, for event on Mon., Sept. 27. Visit <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/golf>.
- 26 President's Forum, President James T. Willerson** speaking, 11:30 a.m., MSB 2.135.

August

- 11 White Coat Ceremony**, 6:30 p.m., Hornberger Conference Center.
- 13, 14 Student Retreat**, Camp Allen. Buses load at Recreation Center at 6:30 p.m.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Ward Casscells appeared on the *Today* show June 8 to talk about prostate cancer

 ...**The Kid's Place** patient handbook won 21st Annual Healthcare Advertising Awards "Silver"

...**Dr. Larry Gilstrap**, Obstetrics & Gynecology, recently presented "The Disease of Theories - Preeclampsia" at the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) 52nd Annual Clinical Meeting in Philadelphia...**Dr. Carlos Hamilton**, executive vice president, External Affairs, is the new president of the American Association of Clinical Endocrinologists...**Dr. Robert Tan** was quoted concerning Alzheimer's disease (*Houston Chronicle*, 6/6/2004).

Hard Hat Update

NARAYANA READIES PATIENT-FRIENDLY 3 TESLA SCANNER

It came on a flatbed truck May 5. Cranes were put into motion, walls were broken down, and 20-foot-plus tall stabilizing posts were constructed all the way down to the basement floor to make room for this newest MRI Center addition — a 6 ton 3 Tesla scanner.



Workmen guide the Tesla installation.

"I'm hoping by the early part of August or by the latter part of July to have the magnet fully functioning and operational," said **Dr. Ponnada Narayana**, professor and director, Magnetic Resonance Research, Department of Radiology. Narayana projects treating 1,250 patients annually to become a self-supporting, break-even venture. A \$500,000 NIH grant, "3 T Whole Body Magnetic Resonance Scanner," has been very important in supporting the scanner's debut. An earlier and heavier scanner (See *Scoop* Oct. 3, 2003), the 7 Tesla, was delivered eight months ago.

How does a 3 Tesla scanner operate? The magnet employs a close cycle refrigeration system. The evaporated liquid helium that is used to cool the magnet, is compressed and pumped back. "That way we only have to refill the magnet with helium once a year," Narayana said. Otherwise it's very expensive to keep refilling the magnet. Liquid helium is what keeps the current carrying conductor that produces the magnetic field in a super conducting state.



How is the magnet mechanically stabilized? "It's very interesting," Narayana said. "Actually the Medical School sways back and forth, which is common to buildings in general. But in the case of the 3 Tesla scanner, we had to mechanically stabilize it." So a construction crew led by project manager **Steve Niskanen** had to separate the magnet from the slab by building support

(Continued on back)

DEAN SCHULTZ ADDRESSES BEST, WORST OF TIMES

With the theme "best of times, worst of times," **Dean Stanley Schultz** held a lively town hall meeting June 9 and outlined his plans for the Medical School.

Regarding the "worst of times," Dean Schultz said that time was behind us, showing pictures of the School during and after Tropical Storm Allison. We are now entering the "best of times," he said, noting that it was the third anniversary of Allison, which we have not forgotten but have put behind us.

"We have our new Leather Lounge, and the new Learning Resource Center and Gross Anatomy Lab will soon be completed," he said. "Without Allison, we wouldn't have these new facilities."

As the reconstruction on the Medical School Building winds down, the School's next big project is tearing down the John Freeman Building and constructing its replacement. "The new building will be six stories, with the top two dedicated to the new vivarium, so that we may ensure that the

(Continued on back)



Dean Stanley Schultz



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HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
MEDICAL SCHOOL

Stanley Schultz, M.D., Interim Dean
Darla Brown, Director
e-mail: M.Darla.Brown@uth.tmc.edu
Colleen O'Brien, Editor
e-mail: Colleen.L.O'Brien@uth.tmc.edu
Phone: 713-500-5114; FAX: (713) 500-0597
E-Scoop online:
http://www.med.uth.tmc.edu/community_affairs/escoop.htm
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Celebrating Teaching Excellence

BENJY F. BROOKS, M.D., OUTSTANDING CLINICAL FACULTY AWARD

Dr. Francisco Fuentes has been named the 2003-2004 recipient of the Benjy F. Brooks, M.D. Outstanding Clinical Faculty Award. Established in 1991 by the Alumni Association, this award is presented by the alumni of the Medical School to recognize individuals “who complement and enhance the education program by serving as role models for students.”

Dr. Benjy Brooks was the first board-certified woman pediatric surgeon in the United States and joined the Medical School’s faculty in 1973. Until her death in 1998, she remained active in the life of the School and was a dedicated student mentor.

Fuentes is professor of medicine in the Medical School’s Division of Cardiology within the Department of Internal Medicine. In 2000, he was named holder of the Theodore & Maureen O’Driscoll-Levy professorship in cardiology research. He is the director for the Cardiology Fellowship Program and is widely recognized as a leading educator in the field of preventive cardiology. His annual preventive cardiology conference has benefited health professionals and the general public throughout the past decade. Additionally, he is always ready to make time to talk with school groups about careers and heart healthy topics.

Since joining the UT Medical School faculty in 1978, Fuentes has received the Dean’s Teaching Excellence Award numerous times and has long been recognized by students and faculty alike as a physician role model for outstanding patient care, student teaching, and professional mentorship. His teaching excellence and dedication to lifelong learning continues to shape the future of discovery and leadership within his field.

In 2000, he served as national president for the American Society for Preventive Cardiology – one of many professional organizations he actively supports and serves. His honors and awards include a long list of local, state, and national recognition, including the 2002 Gold Medal by Murcia Regional Government from the president of Spain.

A native of Spain, Fuentes received his medical degree in 1969 from the University of Valencia. Fluent in multiple languages, he completed internship and residency training in both Spain and the United States, including a residency in internal medicine at Morristown Memorial Hospital in New Jersey and fellowship training at Baylor College of Medicine.

In addition to his numerous research grants and scientific publications, his nominator for this award summarized the human qualities of Fuentes that stand out day after day. Said his faculty colleague, “Those who have worked with Dr. Fuentes know that he is a gentle, caring, and level-headed individual who always puts his patients and students first. As a teacher, he is always positive in his approach and does not resort to teaching by intimidation. He is true gentleman and a credit to our profession and our School.”

Former recipients of the Benjy F. Brooks Teaching Award include: **Drs. Walter M. Kirkendall (1991); William S. Fields (1992); James T. Willerson (1994); Harold T. Pruessner (1995); Herbert L. DuPont (1997); Larry D. Scott (1999); Herbert L. Fred (1999); Becky L. McGraw-Wall (2000); Terry K. Satterwhite (2001); Cheves M. Smythe (2002); and Ian Butler (2003).**



Dr. Francisco Fuentes

- B. Boutwell

3 TESLA SCANNER ARRIVES, CONTINUED

rods made out of steel, wood, and concrete at the base of the platform extending all the way down to the basement level to minimize any vibrations coming from the building.



Dr. Ponnada Narayana

Narayana said. Rice University researchers also are very interested in using the scanner for their functional MRI needs, he added.

What is perhaps unique about the 3 Tesla is its patient-friendly nature. “We have a room with a mock scanner that helps,” Narayana said. “You don’t want your patients – especially children – to be apprehensive. So we condition the patient with the mock scanner. The patient then knows what to expect, and we don’t waste valuable magnet time.”

In addition, two cameras are housed in the room. The object is twofold: to observe how the patient is doing and to get feedback from the patient, who can communicate directly with the operator.

“The good news is that if the patients know beforehand what the process will feel like, it makes the whole scenario run a lot smoother,” he said. The MRI Center may be housed in a Medical School setting, but Narayana is making sure that both clients and physician-researchers who use this facility are treated first-rate.

- C. O’Brien

TOWN HALL MEETING, CONTINUED

horrible tragedy our animals endured will never happen again,” Dean Schultz said.

The new building will be home to four interdisciplinary areas of research: developmental neurobiology, functional (physiological) genomics, structural biology, and molecular biology of human pathogens.

Dean Schultz also spoke about what makes a medical school great. “The most important elements of a great school are its people – its faculty, staff, and students. I want to acquire, mentor, and retain a great group,” he said.

He added that it is important to find money for salary increases – both merit and cost-of-living raises. However, he said that he will not promise a date by which this will be accomplished. “I am not going to promise things that I cannot deliver,” he said.

Dean Schultz took questions from the audience, which mostly focused on the construction projects. When asked if faculty could reserve space in the new John Freeman Building, Dean Schultz said that space would be assigned programmatically, according to the four areas of research. “It is not a given that current occupants of that building will be moving back to it, which I know is disappointing,” he said.

One member of the audience asked when the School’s flood protection measures would be completed and if they would really be able to protect against a second Allison. “They will be finished by the end of June, and if there is another Allison, I am camping out in the Medical School because it will be the safest place around,” he said.

- D. Brown