



# Scoop

Feb. 4, 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

## Events to Know

### February

- 7 Megan Cole**, "The Poem in Medicine," noon, MSB 4.100.
- 8 Dr. Stefan Schlatt** to discuss spermatogonial stem cells in primates, noon, MDA R11.1100, Rms. 5 & 6, 1515 Holcombe.
- 17 Dr. Ward Casscells**, "Tsunami Disaster Relief Efforts and Influenza," noon, MSB 2.135.

## UTMost Interest

**Kimberly Napoli Eaton, Ph.D.**, Admissions and Surgery, was in Hong Kong to address "A Discussion of the Performance of Immunosuppressive Drug Monitoring Methods."

**NOTE: Quick Copy has moved to MSB B.210, and Graphics has moved to MSB G.500, behind the guard's desk.**

## NEW REQUIRED ONLINE SUBMISSION SYSTEM FOR HUMAN SUBJECT GRANT PROPOSALS IN EFFECT

Check out the iRIS, (Internet Research Information System), the new, mandatory online submission system for human subject research studies. Visit

<[http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ut\\_general/research\\_acad\\_aff/orsc/iris.html](http://www.uth.tmc.edu/ut_general/research_acad_aff/orsc/iris.html)> to view the documentation. Mandatory online-only submissions started this week.

All key study personnel on active protocols, which have been converted into the new system, need to be added to the study information, so they can access the system. Do that by sending an e-mail to <[cphs@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:cphs@uth.tmc.edu)>, including the protocol number (e.g. HSC-xx-xx-xxx) and the name of each person needing access.

The iRIS support line is 713-500-3800.

To register for training at UCT, Rm. 1115, contact <[Barbara.S.Legate@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Barbara.S.Legate@uth.tmc.edu)>, or 713-500-3470.

## BUJA RECEIVES DISTINGUISHED SERVICE AWARD

**Dr. Max Buja**, executive vice president for academic affairs and former dean of the Medical School, received the 2005 George T. Caldwell, M.D. Distinguished Service Award from the Texas Society of Pathologists at the organization's 84<sup>th</sup> annual meeting in Austin Jan. 22.



Dr. Max Buja

The award is the organization's most prestigious award and represents the highest ideals in service to medicine, community, and humanity as exemplified by the late pathologist, **Dr. George T. Caldwell** (1882 – 1947).

The award has been presented annually since 1955 to recognize outstanding physicians and medical scientists for service and dedication to the field of pathology.

Buja, a graduate of Tulane, joined the UT Health Science Center in 1989 as chair of the Medical School's Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine.

In addition to his many awards and honors, he is an author on more than 270 research articles, 200 book chapters and review articles, two books in the field of cardiovascular medicine, and the recently published *Netter's Atlas of Human Pathology*.

- B. Boutwell

## LEARNING HEART HEALTHY HABITS WITH THE SMALLINGS

It was a happy occasion for the heart attack survivors and friends who gathered this past Sunday afternoon to celebrate life, laughter, and good food. The event was a "Heart Healthy Cooking Class" at Central Market. **Sharon Smalling, M. Ph., R.D., L.D.**, a dietitian with Memorial Hermann Hospital Nutrition Consultants, and co-author, *Meal Solutions for Busy People*, made the event a little sweeter with fun advice about eating healthy. Extolling the benefits of both dark chocolate and red wine, she said "Bittersweet chocolate is reputed to be good for your heart, as is red wine. They're full of antioxidants." Guests nodded in enthusiastic approval.



Sharon Smalling makes a healthy eating point.

In addition, guests were amply entertained by quick-minded Central Market Chef **Sean Ballesteros**, who showed prowess not just with a knife slicing through beef tenderloin medallions with a mushroom and wine sauce, but with responding to peppery questions from the audience as well.



Dr. Smalling gives an update on his focus in heart research.

The evening had a serious side. "Mortality is still a substantial outcome of heart disease," said **Dr. Richard Smalling**, Internal Medicine/Cardiology, a co-host of the event. (Cont'd., back)



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A part of The University of Texas  
Health Science Center at Houston

Stanley Schultz, M.D., Dean  
Darla Brown, Director  
e-mail: [M.Darla.Brown@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:M.Darla.Brown@uth.tmc.edu)  
Colleen O'Brien, Editor  
e-mail: [Colleen.L.O'Brien@uth.tmc.edu](mailto:Colleen.L.O'Brien@uth.tmc.edu)  
Phone: 713-500-5114; FAX: (713) 500-0597

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Produced weekly by the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education



## ***MALPRACTICE LIABILITY LIMITS, TSBME FOCUS OF MSRDP PRESENTATION***

In addition to the usual financial and committee updates, the annual meeting of the Medical Service, Research and Development Board (MSRDP) Jan. 25 featured an update on the state's latest medical malpractice legal changes and their effects on UT Physicians.

**Jan Ferguson, J.D.**, an attorney in the UT System Office of General Counsel who manages medical malpractice cases, told the audience that while a test case still has not been brought forward since the legislative changes, a highlight includes lowering the personal liability of physicians to \$100,000 per case.

"Each physician employed by the state is not personally liable for damages in excess of \$100,000 for any malpractice lawsuit filed after Sept. 1, 2003," Ferguson said. The \$100,000 figure includes economic and noneconomic damages, she added.

Individuals must make an election to sue either the physician or the institution. The institution's liability is limited by statute to \$250,000; each physician's liability is limited by statute to \$100,000.

As the number of malpractice lawsuits have decreased across the UT System, there has been an increase in investigations by the Texas State Board of Medical Examiners (TSBME), Ferguson reported.

"More patients are filing complaints with the state board, and they have received more funding from the Legislature," Ferguson said. In addition, the board is initiating its own investigations of physicians. Of 6,090 complaints filed in 2004, 1,900 were deemed to merit a full investigation.

Any UT Physician receiving a letter of complaint from the state board is urged to contact **Cathy Thompson**, risk manager for the health science center. The UT System will pay for legal representation before the TSMBE for cases that allege medical negligence against UT Physicians and will pay up to \$25,000 in legal fees to defend such complaints.

- D. Brown

## ***A HEART HEALTHY EVENING OUT, CONT'D.***

Smalling is an advocate of, and principal investigator for, PATCAR (Pre-Hospital Administration of Thrombolytic Therapy with Urgent Culprit Artery Revascularization). The PATCAR trial serves as the major trial for evaluation of an early aggressive approach to heart attacks.



**Chef Sean Ballesteros, Central Market, reveals his craft.**

Smalling also is particularly interested in advancing the use of the "Ulert-UT Circular Heart," invented and patented by retired surgeon **Dr. Alan Ulert** and **Henry Lang**. Smalling said additional funding is needed to advance this research, which can save lives.

"Too often other disciplines, particularly those focusing on the most basic aspects of medical science, receive the lion's share of the attention and funding. Research in those areas is needed, but with added funding, we can have breakthroughs in myocardial infarction treatment and save lives immediately, rather than seeing the benefits in the years to come" he said.



**Meal Solutions was co-authored by clinical dietitian and nutrition specialist Sharon Smalling.**

- C. O'Brien



## ***Goodbye JFB***

*Goodbye JFB,  
For next week you  
will no longer be.  
Before the wrecking  
ball,  
We remember those  
who walked these  
halls.  
From docs, techs,  
students, and staff,  
We all had a task.*

*Through bugs, ants, fire, and floods.*

*We all worked together to get our jobs done.*

*Through our tears*

*We say goodbye to our home of many years*

*For next week, JFB*

*Will no longer be.*

*- Anonymous*

## ***HCMS AND HAM INSTALL NEW LEADERS***

The Harris County Medical Society (HCMS), the professional association for Harris County physicians, and the Houston Academy of Medicine (HAM), the scientific and charitable organization of HCMS physicians, installed new officers last week at the Westin Galleria Hotel.

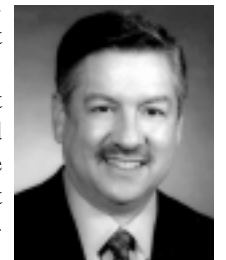
Houston family practitioner **Dr. Robert C. Vanzant** was installed as the 104th president of the HCMS. Vanzant is an assistant clinical professor at the health science center as well as assistant clinical professor at Baylor College of Medicine. Serving the public comes naturally to Vanzant. His grandfather, **Dr. B. T. Vanzant**, was HCMS president in 1928 and a founding member of HAM.



**Dr. Robert Vanzant**

Cardiologist and internist **Dr. A. Tomas Garcia III** was installed as the 2005 president of HAM. Garcia maintains his private medical practice at Houston Heart Centre.

**Dr. L. Maximilian Buja**, executive vice president of academic affairs at the health science center, and **Dr. Peter G. Traber**, president and chief executive officer at Baylor College of Medicine, represent Houston's medical schools on the HCMS Executive Board.



**Dr. A. Tomas Garcia III**

HCMS was established in 1903. Its mission is to be the leading advocate for its member physicians, their patients, and the community, in promoting the highest standards of ethical medical practice, access to quality medical care, medical education, research, and community health.