



Scoop

Jan. 28, 2005

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

February

- 1 **Perri Klass, M.D.**, to present “Quirky Kids: Understanding Children Who Don’t Fit In,” 8 a.m., MSB 2.103; and “Early Literacy in Pediatric Primary Care: Reach Out & Read,” noon, MSB 3.001.
- 1 **Practicing Better Medicine Through Public Health Knowledge Lecture Series, Stephen Linder, M.D.**, on resolving the conflict between public health’s and medicine’s approach to illness, noon, MSB 2.006. Blue book credit.
- 2 **Literature and Medicine Lecture Series, Introduction. Megan Cole and Bill Monroe, Ph.D.**, noon, MSB 4.100.
- 3 **George Delclos, M.D.**, “Connecting Practice to the Environment: Assessing and Preventing Occupational and Environmental Hazards,” noon, MSB 2.006.

March

- 16 **Withers Lecture**, speaker **Scott R. Lillibridge, M.D.** will address his experiences with underserved populations and disaster relief, 1 p.m., MSB 2.135.

BERM BEGINS

Tree removal around the Medical School is taking place over the next several days. Eighteen trees are scheduled to be replaced with 30 trees equal in total circumference to the ones taken down.



Workmen on the former Lot A side of Medical School. Enhanced landscaping of Webber Plaza will be the result of the berm project, which also will provide a secondary flood protection measure for the Medical School.

Work also is continuing along the Fannin side — the grass has been cleared out and the concrete wall removed.



Front end loader at work on the Fannin side berm project.

WESTNEY TAKES ON ROLE OF DIVISION DIRECTOR, UROLOGY

Dr. Richard Andrassy, chair, Department of Surgery, has appointed **Dr. O. Lenaine Westney**, assistant professor of surgery in the Division of Urology, to the role of division director, Urology and program director of the urology residency program, effective immediately.



Dr. O. Lenaine Westney

Westney came to the health science center in 1994 as a postgraduate student in urology. She had previously completed her postgraduate work in general surgery at Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital in New Brunswick, N.J. Her subspecialty fellowship here was in neuro-urology, incontinence, and pelvic reconstruction.

She is presently medical director, Memorial Hermann Urology and Continence Center, and is fellowship co-director in Female Urology, Neurourology, and Pelvic Reconstruction.

As division director, Urology, Westney replaces **Dr. Michael Ritchey**, who is leaving to go into private practice in Phoenix, Ariz.

Westney received her undergraduate degree from Howard University in Washington, D.C., and her medical degree from Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine in Baltimore.

She has served as principal investigator in several clinical trials and protocols, has made numerous presentations in her field, is widely published both nationally and internationally, and has served on national government review panels, study sections, and on national and local hospital committees.

- C. O'Brien

BUILDING A STAIRWELL TO THE MEDICAL SCHOOL'S BASEMENT

Building a stairway to heaven it's not. But building a stairway to the Medical School's basement — when it's ready to use in mid-May — will provide ready access to four large classrooms, the UT Bookstore, Graphics, and other administrative offices currently being built out in the basement.

The first step in the stairwell process will occur Sat., **Jan. 29** and Sun., **Jan. 30**, with a utility shutdown, **Paul Ehrhardt**, project manager, said. “We will reroute all the utilities that are presently in the footprint of that stairwell that we’re going to be cutting out, a 20-foot by 30-foot area, or 600 square feet,” in the Medical School’s Leather Lounge area, where presently a blue circular pattern is inscribed on the terrazzo floor.

“The utility outages will last a matter of hours, and then everything will be back to normal,” Ehrhardt said.

The shutdown this weekend will entail: acid waste, sanitary waste, a vacuum line, a compressed air line, a data line, and a power line.

Next, after the utilities are rerouted, workmen will build a containment room made out of sheetrock around the stairwell hole. “We’re trying to contain dust and somewhat contain the noise,” said Ehrhardt.

(Cont'd. on back)



Track excavator at work underneath terrazzo floor in basement.



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A part of The University of Texas
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STAIRWELL WORK TO BEGIN, CONT'D.

“They’re actually going to cut out the hole in the first half of February. Harvey Builders is the contractor and workmen will begin on approval of the steel staircase shop drawings,” Ehrhardt said.

A 17 ft. high by 600 sq. ft. scaffold, or shoring, made up of a mass of steel poles and cross brackets will then be constructed from the basement, before workmen cut the floor out. As sections of the concrete floor are cut, they will be supported by plywood decking on top of the scaffolding, then pushed down a chute to the basement floor level and removed from the building.

“Cutting concrete is a very noisy process; that’s why it’s going to be performed after hours, after 5 p.m., before 8 a.m., or on the weekends, or on holidays. It’ll take basically a week’s time to cut the hole,” said Ehrhardt, who estimated the cutting to be finished by the end of February.

The project manager said the top concerns are to minimize noise and vibration transmitted to the building structure in an effort not to disturb any of the animals, or any of the magnetic equipment, or electron microscopes. “That’s why all the cutting will take place on a separate shored up platform not connected to the building,” Ehrhardt said. - C. O’Brien

**FITNESS CENTER HEALTH FAIR
A SUCCESS**

The Medical School’s Fitness Center celebrated a Health & Wellness fair last week and is still offering a three-month membership special -- \$54 -- that’s \$18-a-month, to get fit. Aerobics and yoga classes are included. Call 713-500-5044, or stop by the 8th floor Penthouse, Medical School.



More than 200 faculty, staff, and students took part.

GRANT TAYLOR SPEAKER SAYS POVERTY IS A MENACE TO YOUR HEALTH

Dr. Stanley Reiser commented to a packed Sammons auditorium crowd at the Grant Taylor Lectureship last week that the inspiration of the lecture series – **Dr. Grant Taylor** – who died in 1995, wore many hats during his lifetime. After the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, Taylor was director of the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission (ABCC); he also had a role in the organization and development of a regional medical plan centered in Houston; and he organized and headed what would become the health science center’s Division of Continuing Education.

Taylor’s memoirs recall that his ABCC experiences convinced him that selfless teamwork and collaboration were necessary to obtain maximum benefit from medical research and education.

One of the quotes found among Taylor’s papers, which he attributed to **Teddy Roosevelt**, said: “Far better it is to dare mighty things, to win glorious triumphs, even though checkered by failure...because they live in the gray twilight that knows not victory nor defeat.”

The Grant Taylor Lectureship has dealt with controversial topics at times, but focuses on pertinent community health issues, nonetheless, Reiser said.

This year’s lecturer, **Dr. Marilyn Gaston**, a physician, is a former assistant Surgeon General and director, Bureau of Primary Health Care. Her talk focused on “Low-Income and Uninsured Americans: How Can They Get the Care They Need?”

Sashaying down the aisle to recorded rhythm and blues tunes, and urging the audience to get up out of their seats, the speaker began her lively talk with the words, “We need a revolution.” There are 45 million uninsured in this country, she said, and 70 million Americans were uninsured for part of the year in 2003. Rattling off figures, Gaston elucidated that 18,000 people die annually mainly because they’re uninsured. “That is the fifth leading cause of death in this country,” she said. The speaker painted broad verbal brush strokes: the poverty rate is increasing, the poor and uninsured die prematurely – of which 50 percent of those deaths are preventable.



Dr. Gaston discusses a primary care centered community health system.

She said that in Harris County alone, there are over 1.1 million people uninsured. Although Harris County Hospital District spends \$700 million annually, or 20 cents per \$100 evaluation property tax, only 45 percent of the uninsured are included in health care programs. Overall, about one-third of the need is being met. More businesses are picking up the slack, said the speaker, and there are expanding services in the clinics and communities.

After the talk, organizers presented the findings of four groups studying health care in Houston and discussed them with the audience.

**STUDENTS
OUTREACH TO
COMMUNITY**



Clinic participants were first row, l. to r.: Abby Ornelas, MSII; Sandra Cervantes, MSII, Ida Juarez, MSII (ULAMS president); and Marquita Decker, MSI. Second row, l. to r.: Kelvin Kemp, MSI, Jose Perez, MSI, and Leroy Arenivar, MSII.

Medical School members of The United Latin American Medical Students (ULAMS) and Student National Medical Association (SNMA) participated last month in a Health Fair at La Rosa Family Services, an organization dedicated to the prevention of domestic violence.

The students screened 68 adults, and 10 previously unidentified cases of hypertension were found.

Additionally, boxes of children’s books were donated to the clinic by **Analissa Moreno**, daughter of **Dr. Carlos A. Moreno**, chair, Family and Community Medicine.

Moreno and **Liliana Rodriguez, MPH**, director of special projects, Office of Community and Educational Outreach, and a microbiology instructor, were in attendance as faculty advisers.

FACULTY NOTE -

Pedro Ruiz, M.D., professor and vice chair, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences, published the fourth edition of his textbook, *Substance Abuse: A Comprehensive Textbook* (Lippincott Williams and Wilkins, publishers), in January 2005. His textbook has become one of the most highly regarded and widely used texts in the field of addiction studies in the United States and abroad.

- S. Rasp



Eighty percent of the uninsured work full time, Dr. Gaston explains.