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## NEWS AND NOTES 1991, MAY 3

The Rockefeller University

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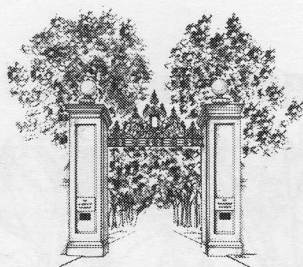
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May 3, 1991

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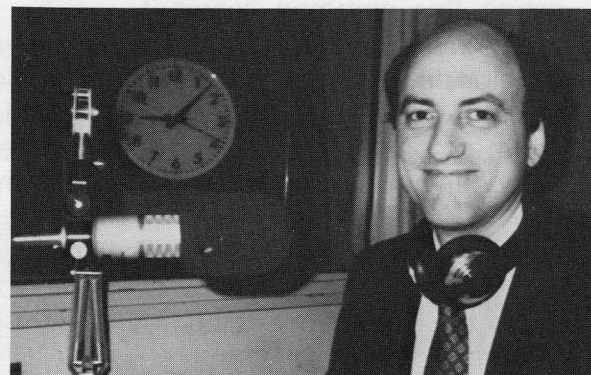


# News & Notes

## Call-in show hosts RU scientists

Assistant Professor Eliot Brinton and Research Associate Elizabeth R. de Oliveira e Silva were featured on the WMCA-AM Radio program *Health Saturday*, a call-in show, on April 6. During the live broadcast, the two answered questions posed by the listening audience on cholesterol and diet. According to Dr. Harold Wolchok, host of the show and Professor of Economics at CUNY, the program reaches an estimated audience of 480,000 during its 9:00-noon broadcast.

This is the second time Brinton and Silva have appeared on *Health Saturday*, and Silva took the opportunity to announce that she is looking



Eliot Brinton



Courtesy of WMCA

for identical and fraternal twins willing to stay in the Rockefeller Hospital for a four-week period to participate in HDL metabolism studies. Questions on this research can be addressed to Silva at x7676.

Brinton announced he is looking for people with very high (over 100 mg/dl) or very low (under 25 mg/dl) HDL cholesterol levels to be part of a study on genetic regulation of HDL metabolism. Questions on Brinton's studies can be addressed to x7706. ➡➡

Elizabeth Silva

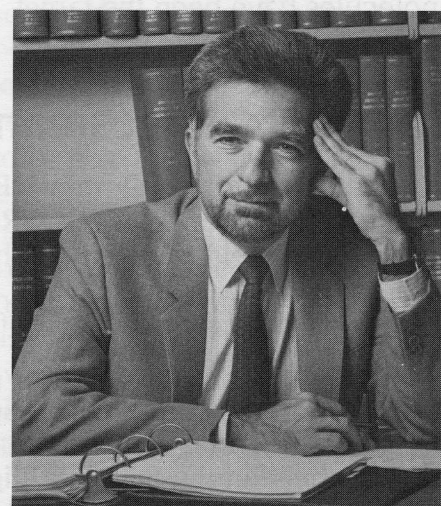
## Cerami elected to NAS

Professor Anthony Cerami was elected a member of the National Academy of Sciences this week, along with 59 other American scientists and engineers and 15 foreign associates from nine countries. With this election, Cerami, Rockefeller's R. Gwin Follis-Chevron Professor, becomes the 30th current member of the Academy from Rockefeller University.

The NAS was established in 1863 by a congressional act signed by Abraham Lincoln. It is a private organization that advises the federal government on matters concerning science and technology.

Election to the NAS is considered one of the highest honors that can be accorded a scientist. The total number of current members is 1,626.

Cerami earned his B.S. degree from Rutgers in 1962 and his Ph.D. from Rockefeller in 1967. He was appointed Dean of Graduate and Postgraduate Studies at the university in 1986. The author or coauthor of over 300 publications, Cerami's current research focuses on mechanisms of diabetes and aging, mechanisms of cytokines and parasitology. ➡➡



Anthony Cerami

Ingbet Grütner

## Targeting the Achilles heel of disease

A highly shared region of surface proteins on gram-positive bacteria may prove to be their "Achilles heel," says Professor Vincent Fischetti. By targeting this common segment, researchers should be able to develop new antibiotic strategies to control infection by a wide range of prevalent and potentially dangerous pathogens.

Fischetti will discuss this promising bacterial vulnerability Tuesday at the annual meeting of the American Society for Microbiology in Dallas.

Proteins on the surface of bacteria function in a variety of ways to enhance the organisms' survival. The proteins help the microorganisms invade tissues, evade the body's natural defenses and extend the time they remain in infected tissues. All these functions contribute to the pathogen's ability to cause disease. In order to perform these various functions, however, the proteins must be firmly attached within the bacterial cell.

Because of their disease-enhancing properties, these molecules have been the target of intensive study. While re-

searching the M protein, the surface protein of group A streptococci, Fischetti, Research Associate Vijaykumar Pancholi and Postdoctoral Fellow Olaf Schneewind discovered a region of six amino acids that may play a major role in anchoring these proteins within the bacterial cell. Further studies in the lab revealed that this region is not unique to the M protein but rather is highly conserved among all 22 known surface molecules on a variety of gram-positive bacteria, such as *Staphylococcus aureus*, *Streptococcus mutans* and *Enterococcus fecalis*.

"This conserved amino acid sequence provides a potential new target for antibiotic intervention," Fischetti said. "Just as penicillin and related antibiotics interfere with the assembly of the bacterial cell wall, an alternate antibiotic strategy may now be developed to block the attachment of cell surface proteins in gram-positive bacteria. And if you can block the way these proteins attach, you have a good chance of interrupting the organism's ability to cause disease."

—by Susan Blum

## Cottages update



*In a random drawing in April, over 100 people were selected from 330 who applied to reserve time at the university's MacInnes cottage (above) and Hostage cottage upstate. Applicants not chosen were put on a waiting list and will be notified in turn as cancellations occur. Both cottages recently received new storm and screen windows, and the kitchen at Hostage has been renovated.*

## Pre-retirement counseling offered in June

Two pre-retirement counseling sessions will be offered Thursday, June 13, from 12:00 to 1:00 and 1:00 to 2:00 in Caspary 1B. Representatives from TIAA and the Personnel Office will be available to answer all questions related to retirement and the continuation of benefits following retirement. Registration is required; contact the Personnel Office at x8300. →→

## Family changes can impact insurance

The Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986, commonly referred to as "COBRA," requires that employees report to the Personnel Office any of the following changes that occur in their family:

- a child's loss of dependent status (if the child no longer satisfies the definition of a dependent under the plan),
- a covered employee's entitlement to Medicare, or
- a divorce or legal separation of a spouse from a covered employee.

This will ensure that proper coverage is obtained by all employees and their families who are eligible. A full statement of university policy on this matter is available from the Personnel Office. →→



## Computer access offered for NSF publications

Jo Ann Greene

The National Science Foundation has just established STIS, the Science and Technology Information System, which provides electronic access to NSF publications. STIS, which can be reached via Telnet, allows a user to search the full text of a publication and obtain a copy electronically.

Some examples of the publications available are:

- NSF Bulletin,
- Guide to Programs,
- Grants booklet and forms,
- NSF telephone book,
- National Science Board reports, and
- Descriptions of NSF-funded research projects.

The service is available 24 hours a day and can support up to 10 people on the system at one time. There is no charge for connect time while using the service, and no need to register for a password. The first time a user logs in, he or she is asked to specify a personal ID and to register. This ID is then used on subsequent connections.

The Telnet address and a sample session is documented under *help nsf* or *help stis* on r2, r8, rb and rj. A copy of the manual and an index of all publications can be found in the Users' Area, TSH B7, and may be printed through *help*.

Those needing help using the system can call the consultant at x8940, or come to the Users' Area between 9:15 and 4:45, Monday-Friday. →

## Social Services improves patient life

With the increasing diversity of the patient population of the Rockefeller Hospital, the role of the hospital's Social Services Unit has become even more important. Headed by social worker Lanie Fleischer, the three-person department excels at making patients with a variety of ailments feel at home.

"Our mission is to work with the medical and nursing staff to make each patient's stay comfortable," comments Fleischer. "We also address the special needs that families of our patients often face." Much of the work of the department is with epidermolysis bullosa (EB) and multiple sclerosis patients, although all hospital patients can receive assistance from Social Services.

While the stay at Rockefeller Hospital is covered by research grants, a pressing need of many patients is adequate insurance coverage for their long-term health needs. "Some patients need extensive supplies, such as dressings and other materials," says Social Work Assistant Elina Suzuki. "We try to guide them to programs that can help them meet some of these expenses."



Elizabeth Gorman, Elina Suzuki and Lanie Fleischer

The department is especially conscious of the needs of patients who must remain in the hospital for long periods, some for over a year. For these patients, the Recreational Therapist is particularly important. Elizabeth Gorman, who joined the university on April 8 as recreational therapist, feels it is vital for patients to be able to "get away" from the hospital for awhile, even if it's only to escape to the Recreational Therapy unit on the fourth floor. "Fun is key," she says. "Patients need activities and a place to spend time away from the routine of their hospital stay."

Gorman notes there is always a need for volunteers to help escort patients to off-campus events, such as Mets games, Broadway shows, museums and concerts. This month volunteers are needed for trips to Central Park for a few rounds of miniature golf on May 10 and to the Central Park Zoo on May 24. Volunteers are also needed to assist patients during lunchtime and evening hours. Those interested in volunteering for these or any other activities should contact x8474. →

Leif Carlsson

## **Announcements**

### **RockMUG to discuss networks, biology software**

The May meeting of The Rockefeller University Macintosh Users' Group (RockMUG) will be held on Wednesday, May 8, from 11:30 to 12:30 in Caspary 1B. This month's topic is "Connecting to the Outside World: A Guided Tour of the Network Archives of Macintosh and Molecular Biology Software." As usual, the meeting will also feature a general Mac question and answer session. Bring a lunch to the meeting; drinks will be provided. New members are always welcome. For information on RockMUG meetings, contact Rachael Kolb at x8933, or send electronic mail to *rachael*.

### **Art Show deadline nears**

The May 10 deadline is approaching for members of the university community interested in participating in the first Medical Complex Art Show. The exhibit, sponsored by Cornell Medical Library and Lenox Hill Artists Forum, will feature artists from Rockefeller, Cornell Medical Center-New York Hospital and Memorial Sloan-Kettering in a show June 14 through September 13 in the Cornell Library. Submit materials for display to Helen-Ann Brown at Cornell Library. Questions can be addressed to Charles Stepan of the Artists Forum at 472-9772.

### **David Edwards presents thesis**

Biomedical Fellow David Edwards will present his thesis at 3:45 on Tuesday, May 7, in Caspary Auditorium. The title of the thesis is "The Visual Cortex of Primates: What Do Neurons in the Blobs Do?" A tea will precede the presentation at 3:15.

### **Bake sale today**

The Children's School will hold its fourth bake sale today from 8:30 to 3:30 in the Tower Lobby. This will be the final bake sale this academic year. As always, there will be a variety of cakes, muffins, pies, breads and possibly more exotic items, such as sushi. African violets will also be on sale. Proceeds go to benefit the school.

### **Film series shows *La Femme Enfant***

This 1981 film, set in a provincial French village, is Director Raphaele Billetdoux's delicately handled study of the relationship between a deaf-mute farmhand and an 11-year-old girl, and the consequences when she is sent away to school. The film, featuring Klaus Kinski, will be presented by the University Film Series on Sunday, May 5, at 7:30 p.m. in Caspary Auditorium.

### **Cancer Support Group presents lecture**

On Wednesday, May 8, the Cancer Support Group, under the auspices of The Rockefeller University Women's Association, will present a speech by Dr. Joseph Bertino. The lecture, entitled "Progress in Diagnosis and Treatment of Cancer," will take place from noon to 1:00 in Abby Aldrich Dining Room. Bertino is Professor of Medicine and Pharmacology at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center. Coffee and tea will be available, and attendees are encouraged to bring a lunch.

### **Fidelio String Quartet performs today**

The Fidelio String Quartet has been widely praised for its lyricism and virtuosity, and was recently acclaimed by the *Miami Herald* as "an exceptional ensemble worth watching." The award-winning group will perform works of Franz Schubert and Ludwig van Beethoven at today's Tri-Institutional Noon Recital in Caspary Auditorium. Everyone is welcome, and admission is free.



**News & Notes** is published on Fridays throughout the academic year by the Public Affairs Office of Rockefeller University. Suggestions for articles are welcome and may be sent to Box 68, or call 570-8967. Articles may also be submitted via electronic mail to *newsnotes*. The deadline for each Friday's issue is the preceding Monday at 5:00 p.m. The Rockefeller University is an equal opportunity employer and has an affirmative action program to increase the employment of women and members of protected groups at all job levels. Editor: Robert Brown. Designer: Patricia Sadiq.