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## NEWS AND NOTES 1993, VOL.3, NO.32

The Rockefeller University

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## Foundation awards RU grant for graduate women

The Clare Boothe Luce Fund of the Henry Luce Foundation has awarded \$120,000 to The Rockefeller University to support two fellowships for outstanding women in the graduate program.

"This grant is important both because it will help attract top students to The Rockefeller University and because it encourages women, traditionally underrepresented in science, to pursue careers in this field," said President Torsten Wiesel. "This award is the first the university has received from The Henry Luce Foundation and we are honored to have been chosen for it."

The two Clare Boothe Luce Graduate Fellows will be selected on the basis of academic excellence and professional potential. Support, which will begin in the fall of

1994 and last two years, can include tuition, room, board, and other fees and expenses. Clare Booth Luce Graduate Fellowships are normally awarded at the time of a candidate's acceptance into a graduate program, although awards may also be made to women already enrolled in the program who have demonstrated outstanding promise.

The Clare Booth Luce Fund was established under the terms of the will of Clare Boothe Luce and is intended "to encourage women to enter, study, graduate, and teach in science and engineering." In addition to supporting graduate fellows, the fund awards grants for undergraduates and junior faculty.

Luce's remarkable career spanned seven decades and nearly as many professional interests, including journalism, politics, the theater,

diplomacy, and intelligence. Not content with her achievements, she was always eager to consider new topics, to test new hypotheses, and to encourage other women to achieve their own potential. By the time of her death in 1987, she had become a national symbol of women's accomplishments and potential.

Henry Luce, III, chairman and CEO of The Henry Luce Foundation and member of The Rockefeller University Council, said: "All the members of the Selection Committee join me in saying how pleased we are to be able to offer this support through the Clare Boothe Luce Fund. We are delighted that your institution is one of our partners in this program to encourage women in science and engineering."

## Bio-organic chemist to lecture at RU

Steven Benner, professor of bio-organic chemistry at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology, Zurich, will speak on "Analyzing Protein Sequences: Exhaustive Matching, Sequence Evolution, and Predicting *De Novo* the Conformation of Proteins from Sequence Data" at the Friday lecture today (May 21).

Recent studies by Benner have focused on developing a systematic method to predict secondary structure and folding of complex proteins. Through observation of patterns of conservation and variation in amino acid sequences, Benner has found a way to identify surface and interior positions in these proteins. His predictions of several protein and nucleic acid structures were subsequently confirmed by other researchers using crystallographic methods. Benner also studies how proteins have evolved through generations and across species by comparing and contrasting protein sequences and drawing inferences about the conformations of future proteins.

"Benner has accurately predicted some large protein structures, which have since been confirmed—quite a feat, considering their complexity," noted Professor William Agosta, who is hosting the lecture. "His work stands out because it applies chemistry to biology so successfully."

After receiving a Ph.D. in chemistry from Harvard University in 1979, Benner continued to work at Harvard as National Science Foundation Graduate Fellow, Xerox Fellow, and then Junior Fellow of the Harvard Society of Fellows. In 1982, Benner was appointed assistant professor, a position he held until 1986 when he left for Zurich and joined the faculty of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology.

A recipient of a Dreyfus Award for Young Faculty in 1982, Benner has been a Sloane Foundation Fellow and Searle Scholar, and a consultant for the Genetics Institute, Ciba-Geigy, Hoffmann-La Roche, and Sandoz.

The lecture will be held at 3:45 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium. Tea will precede it at 3:15 P.M. in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall.

## Council meeting focuses on urban health crises

by Susan Blum

The more things change, the more, unfortunately, they remain the same.

At the turn of the century, infectious diseases were a major cause of death and a prime target of scientific investigation. In fact, The Rockefeller University (then known as The Rockefeller Institute for Medical Research) was founded in 1901 with the goal of understanding and ultimately conquering infectious diseases.

In the century's first 50 years, dramatic discoveries—many of them made at Rockefeller—elucidated the pathogenesis of infectious microorganisms and paved the way for effective treatments for many infectious diseases. So successful were these efforts that in 1969 the surgeon general declared that the war against infectious diseases was won.

But that pronouncement was

premature. Today, as the century nears its close, old nemeses such as tuberculosis are making a frightening comeback, and a new disease, AIDS, has emerged. The challenges posed by these diseases, and by a host of accompanying social, economic, and policy ills, were addressed at a recent meeting of The Rockefeller University Council, a group of 160 friends of the university who promote public

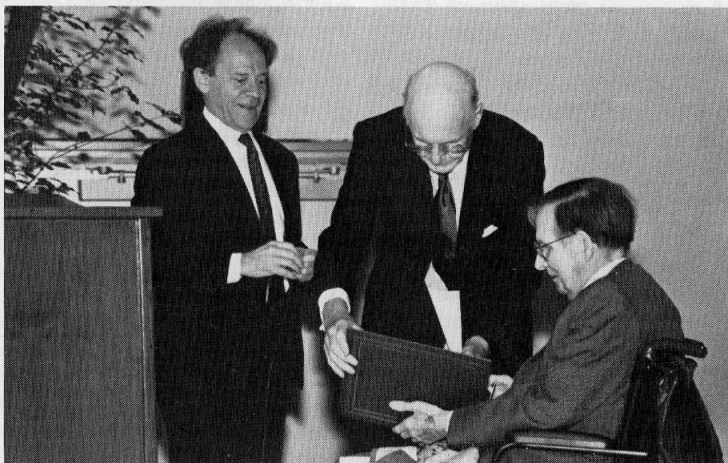
awareness of the role of basic research in disease prevention and treatment. Participants included both Rockefeller researchers and New York City's top public health official.

### The challenge is obvious

"You cannot live in a city like New York today without being in

See *RU Council*, page 3

## New prize honors Lewis Thomas



President Torsten Wiesel (left) and Chairman of the Board Richard Furlood (center) present scientist and writer Lewis Thomas with the first Lewis Thomas Prize, which honors that rare individual in whom the two cultures of science and art are combined. The ceremony took place on Tuesday.

2 RU secretary sings opera

2 Local retailers offer discounts



# RU secretary prepares to sing arias and duets at Carnegie Hall

By Jennifer Horne King

"Singing on stage in full costume is my passion," said Patricia Dell'Ortone, secretary in the Aderem lab, who works part-time at The Rockefeller University in order to survive as a professional opera singer. A performer since the age of two, when she sang and tap-danced with her five siblings at carnivals and U.S.O. shows, Dell'Ortone is currently preparing for a recital in two weeks at Carnegie Hall.

In 10 years of opera singing, Dell'Ortone, who debuted in New York City four years ago, has sung many roles, including the Queen of the Night in Mozart's "The Magic Flute" and Violetta in Verdi's "La Traviata." Currently, Dell'Ortone is learning the role of Donna Elvira in Mozart's "Don Giovanni" to expand her repertoire.

"I am having to learn thousands of words in Italian," she said. "Fortunately, Mozart always composed his music around the text so

that the inflections fall very naturally. This makes the Italian a little easier to learn and allows me to focus on both the music and the role."

Dell'Ortone spends her mornings in the lab. Her afternoons and evenings are spent practicing enunciation and inflection, working her voice and body until they are completely relaxed, and learning her roles. She works with a voice teacher to improve her technique, and a coach to refine her pronunciation, style, and acting.

Dell'Ortone believes she is fortunate to have a job where people are not perturbed by her erratic schedule and where they understand what it takes to be an artist.

"People think that science and music are incompatible, but actually, I see many similarities," she said. "My co-workers are creative thinkers and lead erratic schedules, too. They relate to my crazy lifestyle."

Because she entered the professional opera world at a later age



Patricia Dell'Ortone, part-time secretary in the Aderem lab, spends her afternoons training to sing opera.

and without following conventional channels, Dell'Ortone said she learned—the hard way—what it takes to succeed as an opera singer in New York City. "I tell aspiring opera singers that in this business, talent is not enough. To succeed, they'll need a 'look,' a stage presence, and, with a little luck, they'll also need a teacher or two who have some clout. Professional opera singing is not an easy field to break into, especially in this city, where the competition is fierce."

Opera combines acting and singing, Dell'Ortone's favorite pastimes, but it also involves constant

self-motivation and determination to get the right parts. This fall, Dell'Ortone will try out in roughly 50 auditions. "Each audition is a learning experience and a good way to stay in shape," she said. "At first, I used to take audition rejections personally. Now I thrive on the competition. I go from one audition to the next with the belief that the judges can either take me or leave me. All I can do is perform as well as I can. The rest is up to them."

Joining the other winners of the 1992 Classical Productions Competition, Dell'Ortone will sing arias and duets in Weill Recital Hall in "Classical Productions, A Musical Feast," Fri., Jun. 4, at 8:00 P.M. For tickets to the event, contact the Carnegie Hall box office at (212) 247-7800.

## Neighborhood retailers offer discounts

Several neighborhood retailers offer discounts to Rockefeller University faculty, staff, and students, including:

- Chez René Coiffure, 330 East 65th St., telephone: 879-4247—20 percent off hair cuts, color, perms, bodywaves, and relaxers; 5 percent off collagen conditioning, hair extensions, hair removal, manicures, and pedicures;
- La Coiffure by Raquel, 1314 First Ave., 772-8597—10 percent. Other bonuses include free manicures with haircut and blowdry, and free hair treatment with a perm and highlights;
- Goldberger Pharmacy, 1200 First Ave. (at 65th), 734-6998—10 percent;
- Harlequin Optique, 1176 Second Ave. at 62nd St., 756-0555—20 percent off a complete set of eyeglasses or contact lenses;
- Hudson News, 256 E. 66th St., 988-2683—15 percent, except on non-taxable items;
- I Can't Believe It's Yogurt, 1237 First Ave., 628-8850—10 percent;
- Jaitin Maurice Opticians, 1414 Second Ave., 288-4887—5 percent;
- Leroy Pharmacy, 1325 First Ave., 744-6308—10 percent;
- Letizia restaurant, 1352 First Ave., 517-2244—15 percent for lunch; 20 percent for dinner;
- Love Pharmacy, 1308 First Ave., 737-9512—10 percent off prescription items;

- Ronasi restaurant, 1160 First Ave., 751-0360—10 percent for lunch; 15 percent for dinner;
- Salon East, 241 East 60 St. (between Second and Third Aves.), 319-4247—\$30 for initial visit, 10 percent off;
- The Tamarind, a Thai restaurant at 1134 First Ave. (between 62nd and 63rd Sts.), 319-8158—20 percent for lunch (not including specials); 15 percent for dinner;
- York Opticians, at The New York Hospital, 525 East 68th St., Room K-808, 746-5364—20 percent discount on all glasses;
- Zucchini Cafe Restaurant, 1336 First Ave., 249-0559—20 percent with a cash payment.

To receive discounts, show a Rockefeller University identification card; most restaurants request that cards be shown before orders are placed.

## Letter to the editor:

To everyone at Rockefeller: It has been a pleasure to work for you and with you. To all my friends, I am thankful that our paths have crossed. I thank you for your thoughtfulness and I am overwhelmed with your generosity.

Muriel Fabrizio  
Technical Illustrator,  
Media Resource Service Center,  
who retired this month after almost 38  
years of service to the university

## Planning some time off?

Those planning vacations or some time off to relax may be interested in the holiday schedule for fiscal year 1993-94:

Independence Day: Mon., Jul 5  
Labor Day: Mon., Sep. 6  
Columbus Day: Mon., Oct. 11

Thanksgiving: Thu., Nov. 25  
and Fri., Nov. 26  
Christmas and New Year:  
Mon., Dec. 27 to Fri., Dec. 31  
Martin Luther King, Jr. Day:  
Mon., Jan 17  
Washington's Birthday: Mon.,  
Feb. 21  
Memorial Day: Mon., May 30

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# RU Council meeting addresses 'triple-headed' health threat

(continued from page 1)

some way affected by the triple-headed disease threat of drug addiction, tuberculosis, and AIDS," said Margaret Hamburg, commissioner of the New York City Department of Health.

The United States as a whole has experienced what Hamburg termed "a frightening ascent" of TB cases since the early 1980s, but New York's case load is disproportionately high, accounting for about 15 percent of the total cases in the country. Here as elsewhere, Hamburg explained, the re-emergence of TB is connected to the AIDS epidemic, for people with compromised immune function are more susceptible to developing the disease. To make matters even worse, TB is much harder to treat in people with AIDS. "With almost 50,000 AIDS cases reported in New York City to date, and an estimated 125,000 to 235,000 New Yorkers infected with HIV, the scope of the problem is significant, indeed," Hamburg said.

Fueling these overlapping epidemics of AIDS and TB is the problem of drug addiction, she reported. The use of shared intravenous needles is a major mode of transmission of the HIV virus; in addition, drug addicts often engage in unsafe sexual practices. The result of all these high-risk activities is that addicts, their partners, and their unborn children are placed at risk for AIDS and TB.

"The three public health problems are entangled in ways that compound and exaggerate their effects," Hamburg said, adding that

"many of the same factors underlie the incidence and spread of each disease: poverty, unemployment, substandard housing, and homelessness." Exacerbating the problem even further is an overburdened and undermined public health system that must respond to tremendous demands for patient care while coping with draconian budget cuts and what Hamburg called the "thoughtless consolidation" of many important epidemiological, prevention, and education programs.

Solving these problems will not be easy, but the directions to follow are clear. "We must reaffirm our commitment to the goals of prevention and to public health," Hamburg said, stressing that "in a parallel fashion, we must also be more creative in our research efforts."

## Research makes strides

Creative research is the province of Rockefeller researchers such as Zanvil Cohn and his colleague, Ralph Steinman, in whose lab studies are under way on both AIDS and TB. Cohn discussed some of those investigations at the meeting.

One line of research explores the role played in AIDS by dendritic cells, a type of immune system cell discovered by Steinman and Cohn about a decade ago. One of the normal functions of dendritic cells is to stimulate helper T cells, immune system cells that orchestrate many defensive responses. Cohn reported recent work by Steinman and colleagues showing that dendritic cells also selectively and efficiently transmit the AIDS virus to helper T cells. Scientists in the lab are now exploring the details of how such transmittal occurs. The lab is also one of the few in the country studying TB. These studies focus on the basic pathobiology of the bacillus that causes TB, and on how this organism interacts with various components of the human immune system, including dendritic cells.

In addition to studying basic biology, the lab is exploring new treatments for AIDS and TB. One area of clinical research seeks to boost defensive responses to these diseases by administering genetically-engineered interleukin-2 (IL-2), a messenger molecule that activates many immune system cells. (Natural IL-2 levels are depleted in TB and AIDS.) Another therapeutic strategy, developed by Associate Professor Gilla Kaplan, uses thalidomide (once, in Cohn's words, "a drug of infamy") to diminish the level of tumor necrosis factor-alpha



Speakers at a recent panel on urban health crises included (from left to right) Professor Emeritus Vincent Dole, New York City Commissioner of Health Margaret Hamburg, Associate Professor Mary Jeanne Kreek, and Professor and Vice President for Medical Affairs Zanvil Cohn.

(TNF), a messenger molecule whose excess production can cause fever, severe weight loss, and profound debilitation.

## Addiction studies discussed

These pioneering studies are under way at The Rockefeller University Hospital, which enjoys a unique status as a clinical research center. Some 30 years ago, the hospital's role was also vital to Vincent Dole's ground-breaking studies of addiction. Dole, now a Professor Emeritus at Rockefeller, described those studies at the meeting.

"Back in the 1960s, I was shocked to find that nobody knew much about drug addiction, or, for that matter, considered it a medical problem," Dole recalled. He and his colleague and wife, the late Marie Nyswander, as well as Associate Professor Mary Jeanne Kreek, were among the few who viewed the drug addict not as a worthless criminal but as a person afflicted by a physical disease. With the full support of Detlev Bronk, then president of Rockefeller, they showed that heroin addicts could be successfully treated with methadone, a long-acting opiate. These studies, Dole said, "had a measurable impact on crime and disease in the city." They also strengthened the Rockefeller researchers' belief that, as Dole put it, "Addiction is primarily a pharmacological problem. If you relieve that problem, you uncover a normal person"—one capable of living a productive, responsible life. As a result of the studies by Dole and his colleagues, hundreds of methadone maintenance programs were established worldwide.

The tradition of landmark addiction studies is continued by Kreek

who now heads her own lab, which is an NIH-NIDA Center for Research in Addiction. Kreek told the audience that she remains a strong advocate of "good" methadone maintenance programs—that is, programs that provide adequate doses of the substance along with social, psychological, and other supportive services as required.

Kreek's lab investigates the biological basis of addiction in a variety of basic and clinical studies. One of the lab's main goals is to unravel the mystery of why some people who are exposed to a substance such as heroin or cocaine become addicted, while others do not. Kreek said, "there is very provocative evidence that there may be inherent vulnerabilities to opiate dependency as well as to other addictions." For instance, research in her lab has shown that addiction, not only to heroin, but also to cocaine and alcohol may involve perturbations in the endogenous opioid system. The endogenous opioids are a class of peptides, or short amino acids, that are produced in the brain and that play roles in reproduction and the response to pain and stress.

"We believe that the information we are developing about the biological basis of addiction may prove useful in identifying individuals who are vulnerable to addiction, in developing appropriate prevention methods, and in devising effective treatments," Kreek reported. It is precisely this double emphasis—not just on treatment, but, perhaps even more fundamentally, on prevention—that all conference participants stressed is the key to combating the "triple-headed" threat of AIDS, TB, and drug addiction.



The RU Council meeting included a reception. Here, Trustee David Hamburg, president of the Carnegie Corporation of New York, chats with his daughter, Commissioner Margaret Hamburg.



## Potpourri

### Tri-Institutional Noon Recital

Harpischordist Elaine Comparone and The Queen's Chamber Band will play works by Johann Christian Bach and Johann Sebastian Bach in a "Music of the Bach Family Concert" at the Tri-Institutional Noon Recital today (May 21), presented in part by Garland Publishing, Inc. and Harpischord Unlimited. The Chamber Band, founded in 1991 by Comparone and named after a chamber music group of which Johann Sebastian Bach was a member, consists of two oboists, two horn players, two violinists, a violist, a cellist, and a double bass player. The concert, to be held in Caspary Auditorium at noon, is free. All are welcome.

### Spraying

Weather permitting, the trees and shrubs on campus will be sprayed Sat., May 22, from 6:00 A.M. to noon. The Grounds Department recommends that those on campus that day stay out of direct contact of the spray, close windows, turn off air conditioners, and keep pets inside. For more information, call James Sullivan, x8001.

### Conference

The Rockefeller University will host a cardiovascular colloquium, sponsored by Bristol-Myers Squibb Pharmaceutical Research Institute, on Wed., May 26, beginning at 9:00 A.M. in Caspary Auditorium. For more information, call Betty Gualfetti, (609)252-5646.

### Bake sale

The Ice Rink Committee will hold its last bake sale of the school year on Wed., May 26 from 8:30 A.M. to 3:30 P.M. in Tower Lobby. Proceeds will help pay for the

materials for the rink.

### Concert

The Rockefeller University Children's School will perform "The Great Kapok Tree—A Tale of the Amazon Rain Forest" in Caspary Auditorium, at 9:30 A.M., on Fri., May 28. All parents, grandparents, and friends of The Children's School are welcome. Refreshments will be served after the show.

### Meeting with the president

President Torsten Wiesel will hold an open meeting for all members of the administrative and technical staff in order to review the status of the university's budget and operations, as well as the framework for planning for 1993-94. The meeting will be held on Mon., June 7 at 4:00 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium. Coffee and tea will be available in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall lounge at 3:30 P.M.

### Birth

Assistant Professor Robert Masure and Associate Professor Elaine Tuomanen announce the birth of a son, Stefan Robert, on May 12. He weighed 8 pounds, 6 ounces.

### Virus protection program

New versions of free software packages that protect against Macintosh and PC viruses are now available from Computing Services.

F-PROT 2.08 for the PC needs less memory than previous versions. In addition, it protects against 130 new viruses. F-PROT can be copied from the directory Freebies/Viruspro on all PCs in Users Area/Classroom, Smith Hall A21, or it can be downloaded from the /mac+pc/pc software archives



The university acted as temporary headquarters for the 19th Precinct, which directed the operations of 160 police officers during President Clinton's visit to New York last week.

on rj and rb, in the directory PublicFiles/VirusProtect.

Disinfectant 3.2 for the Macintosh protects against a virus called INIT-M discovered in April. The virus severely damages a large number of folders and files on Macs using System 7.0 or later versions. Disinfectant 3.2 can be copied from the Freebies folder on all Macs in the Users Area, or downloaded from the /mac+pc/mac software archives on rj and rb, in the directory PublicFiles/VirusProtect.

For further information, contact the consultant, x8940.

### Honor

Jules Hirsch, Sherman M. Fairchild professor and physician-in chief, was elected to senior membership of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academy of Sciences.

### Award

David C. White, who received his Ph.D. at The Rockefeller University (Class of '62) and is now executive director of the Center for Environmental Biotechnology at the University of Tennessee-Knoxville, was awarded the 1993 Proctor & Gamble Award in Applied and Environmental Microbiology. The award is given to stimulate research and development in applied microbiology and environmental microbiology.

### Election

Rockefeller University trustee Roy Vagelos, chairman and chief executive officer of Merck & Co., was elected co-chairman of the board of directors of the New Jersey Performing Arts Center last month.

### Special Offer

The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center is offering discounted subscriptions and single tickets

to members of The Rockefeller University for the center's 25th anniversary 1993-94 season. The offer includes a 15 percent discount for new members on subscriptions to three, four, six, or twelve concert series, and a 25 percent discount on single tickets, which may be ordered through the subscription office or purchased at the box office after Wed., Sep. 15. For a season brochure, call Cathy Levin at 875-5788 and mention the Rockefeller affiliation.

### News&Notes Schedule

News&Notes will not be published May 28 due to the Memorial Day weekend.



The university's first Azalea Festival last weekend drew over 300 people to tour the grounds, admire the trees and flowers, and listen to a lecture on plant biology.



Bonnie Kaiser (center), coordinator of The Rockefeller University Science Outreach Program, speaks with Ellen Marks of The New York Times Foundation (right) and others at a reception for the first annual meeting of the Science Outreach Committee on Wednesday. The Science Outreach Program seeks to train high school teachers and interest New York City high school and middle school students in scientific careers.