

12-21-1990

## NEWS AND NOTES 1990, DECEMBER 21

The Rockefeller University

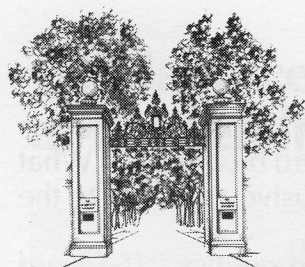
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# News & Notes

## Sherman's march against global warming

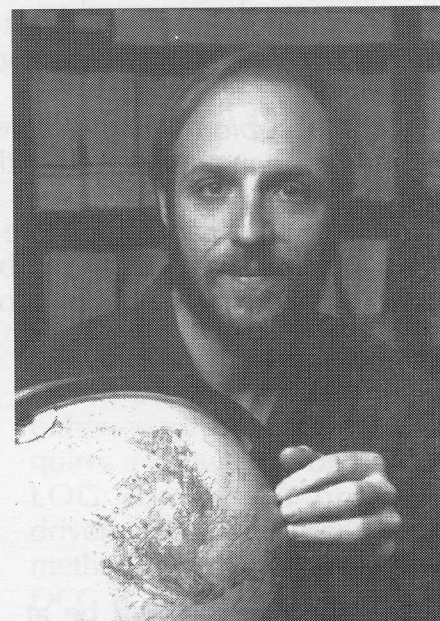
Trypanosomes are parasites that cause African sleeping sickness. Clever protozoa, they are able to evade the immune system by periodically switching their surface coats.

Perhaps inspired by these organisms, Postdoctoral Associate David Sherman, who studies them, has for the past two years been switching *hats*. When not working in the Laboratory of Molecular Parasitology, he can often be found giving speeches on global warming for the Union of Concerned Scientists (UCS), based in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Sherman makes no claims of being an expert on global warming. But when the UCS asked him to talk on the subject, he researched the subject extensively. Now, he says modestly, he is at least "an expert at giving the talk." His presentation focuses on the differences between the science and the policy of global warming, because, he said, "it is policy that people disagree about most."

"There is no question that the greenhouse effect exists," Sherman said. "All organisms on the planet owe their life to the fact that the so-called 'greenhouse gases,' such as carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide, trap the sun's heat. If it weren't for the greenhouse

☛ See **Sherman** on next page



Shari Diamond

David Sherman: concerned about the future

No 'deadhead' searches

## Library adds new database services

The Rockefeller University Library has added two new on-line features for bibliographic database searching. Both are designed to allow individuals to do their own searches without previous searching experience and in a cost-effective manner.

The first feature, GRATEFUL MED, is a software package designed to assist health professionals in searching the MEDLARS databases. It offers user-friendly access to MEDLINE and

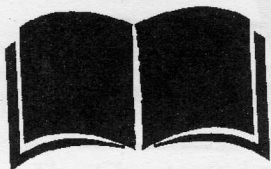
eight other databases produced by the National Library of Medicine (NLM).

GRATEFUL MED provides searchers with an input screen and assists them in selecting appropriate search terms. No knowledge of command language searching techniques is necessary, although GRATEFUL MED does offer the option of bypassing menus to allow direct interaction with the NLM computer for this type of searching.

A computer with printer is available for GRATEFUL MED searching in the Periodicals Office (Welch Hall, first floor) Monday-Friday, 9:00-4:30. It is for the sole use of RU Faculty, Postdoctoral Fellows, Research Associates, Guest Investigators, Students and Administrative Offices. GRATEFUL MED is also available for IBM (and compatibles) and Macintosh com-

☛ See **Library** on page 3

## Word Watchers: Where did *biomedical* begin?



For a book-in-progress on the future of clinical research, Professor Emeritus Edward H. Ahrens, Jr., is seeking original references to the word *biomedical*. What he has found so far may surprise many who apply this inclusive adjective to the kinds of life sciences studied on this campus.

*Biomedical* modifies nouns as various as grant funds and politics. The word only appears under its root syllable *bio-* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* (1989). It is a relatively new word, probably after World War II, and OED gives it a nebulous definition, "... relating to both biology and medicine." Dr. Ahrens adds, "The phrase 'biomedical research' seems redundant."

Early citations of *biomedical* traced thus far reveal strikingly different meanings than we use today. They refer to data collected during studies on environmental stress—radioactive fallout (1951) and space travel (1962).

Curiously, *biomedicine* seems to have slightly different origins. It may represent a shortening of "biomedical engineering," from the sciences that solve practical medical problems, such as designing artificial limbs and heart valves. *Biomedicine* was found in a 1947 Rockefeller Foundation report.

Armed with these clues, are there any word sleuths out there who can provide references to *biomedical* before 1951 and to *biomedicine* in the 1940s? Any personal anecdotes or suggestions of overlooked sources would be most appreciated.

—by Carol L. Moberg

Dr. Ahrens welcomes all ideas and new leads, and requests they be given to Carol Moberg, x7795. —Ed.

### **Sherman** (continued from page 1)

effect, the planet would be at least 60 degrees colder—and probably uninhabitable."

Sherman said there is also no disagreement that if you "pump a sufficient amount" of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, the global temperature will rise. "The question is, how much CO<sub>2</sub> will it take to raise it, and how much will it rise?"

Three or four models are keeping atmospheric scientists and supercomputers busy assessing the prospects. But none of these models is "terrifically accurate," Sherman said, because the phenomenon is so complex.

Therein lies the policy debate. Some say we should wait

for more definitive proof of global warming before taking steps to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases. But others say that if we wait until we are certain, our efforts will be too late.

Sherman places himself firmly in the latter camp, because he believes the potential consequences of global warming are "enormous"—including more frequent and prolonged droughts, extensive crop failures, extinction of plant and animal species, and the flooding of low-lying coastal areas.

During his speech, he tells his audiences there are many things they can do as individuals to help prevent the greenhouse effect. Since energy production accounts for a large percentage

of greenhouse gas emissions, energy-saving strategies are particularly important. These include reducing car travel and keeping cars tuned up; recycling aluminum, glass and paper products; reducing hot water use; insulating attics, walls and hot water heaters; and using energy-efficient light bulbs.

Sherman says his audiences are responsive to his message. "I've met an awful lot of well-intentioned and concerned people of all ages—from high school students to nursing home residents," Sherman said. "There are many people out there who care, and that's helped my outlook a lot. I'm much more optimistic than I used to be."

—by Susan Blum



## Casciano celebrates 40 years at Rockefeller



Nina Casciano

Shari Diamond

Nina Casciano began working at the university on December 18, 1950. In honor of that fact, Tuesday was declared "Nina's Day" in the Purchasing Department. Casciano confesses to being a little "overwhelmed" by the idea of four decades at a place she thought would only be a temporary job. "It feels like yesterday I first walked up that hill," she said, "only now it feels steeper." →→

## Ready to serve for 30 years

Alzatta Fogg began working in the university cafeteria as a waitress in August 1960. Since then she has been Assistant Supervisor, then Supervisor of Food Services, and on October 29, she became Cafeteria Manager. Fogg finds it hard to believe she has worked at Rockefeller for thirty years. Yet, there is nowhere else she'd rather be.

"This is my second home," she said. "Things have changed a lot from the time I first came here, but my goal is still to make people feel welcome and happy when they walk in." →→



Alzatta Fogg

Shari Diamond

## Library (continued from page 1)

puters to those interested in their own subscription. Subscription information is given in GRATEFUL MED brochures available at the Periodicals Office or the Book Circulation Desk.

The second new feature is DIALOG Corporate Connection (DCC). DCC is a menu-driven on-line system for searching the DIALOG files, which contain biological and chemical abstracts, as well as other on-line indexes.

Because this system is menu-driven, it requires an increased amount of on-line time. However, the DCC per-hour on-line cost is only half the usual charge. Therefore, the cost is approximately the same to do a search either way: direct, which requires a knowledge of the DIALOG commands, or menu-driven, which is the user-friendly method. At present, access to DCC is available only to users who have an RU login.

For information about GRATEFUL MED or DIALOG Corporate Connection, contact Librarian Patricia E. Mackey at x8914 or login *mackey*. →→

## Deaths

James William Hess, who worked at the Rockefeller Archive Center for fifteen years, died of heart failure December 1 in White Plains. He was 59 years old. Mr. Hess was the Rockefeller Foundation archivist from 1972 to 1974, when he became Associate Director of the Archive Center, a post he held until his retirement in 1987.

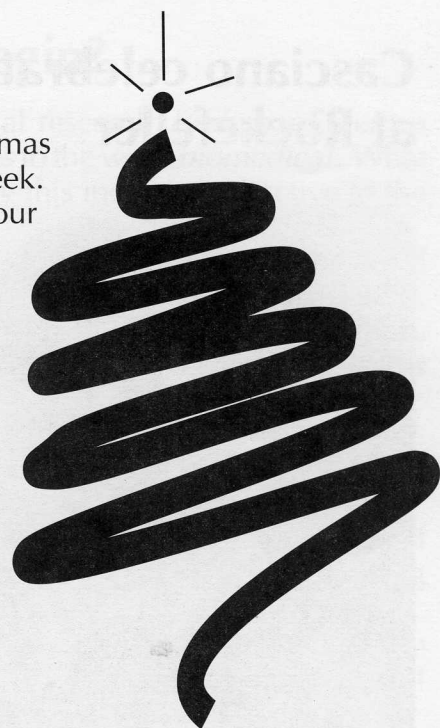
## Chua presents Christmas Lectures

Professor Nam-Hai Chua will present this year's Alfred E. Mirsky Christmas Lectures on Science to a select group of local high school students next week. The students, nominated to attend by their teachers, will hear a series of four lectures by Chua, entitled "Genetic Engineering of Flowering Plants."

The Christmas Lectures on Science began at Rockefeller in 1959. Professor Alfred E. Mirsky and President Detlev Bronk borrowed the idea of a series of scientific lectures delivered at Christmastime from the Royal Institution of Great Britain, where the famous chemist Michael Faraday began a similar series of talks in 1826. (Faraday's most popular Christmas Lecture, presented at least six times, was "The Chemical History of the Candle.") Professor René Dubos delivered the first Christmas Lecture at Rockefeller, entitled "The Unseen World."

For information on the 1990 Christmas Lecture Series, contact Cynthia Greenleaf, x8073. The schedule of talks appears below.

- |            |  |
|------------|--|
| Lecture 1. | <b><i>A natural plant genetic engineer</i></b><br>Dec. 26, 10:00-11:00           |
| Lecture 2. | <b><i>Transgenic plants with useful traits</i></b><br>Dec. 26, 11:30-12:30       |
| Lecture 3. | <b><i>How to express your favorite gene products</i></b><br>Dec. 27, 10:00-11:00 |
| Lecture 4. | <b><i>Light switches for plant genes</i></b><br>Dec. 27, 11:30-12:30             |



## JCB becomes semi-monthly

Beginning next month, The Rockefeller University Press will begin publishing *The Journal of Cell Biology* twice monthly. It has been a monthly publication since it began in 1955.

Ranked one of the ten highest impact journals in the life sciences (excluding review journals) by the Institute for Scientific Information, JCB's new frequency of publication will enable it to keep readers better informed of new developments.

Presently, JCB is being offered at an introductory subscription rate of \$262.50 (30% off the regular annual price of \$375). For more information, contact the Press at x8572. ➡➡

## News&Notes takes a holiday

There will be no *News and Notes* for the next two weeks because of the holidays. Watch for the January 11 issue. ➡➡

## Dialing Tokyo?

Telecommunications advises those telephoning Japan that area code "3" in Tokyo is being changed by Nippon Telegraph and Telephone to "33" December 31. Questions regarding the new code should be directed to 1-800-835-8659, NTT's "number change hotline." ➡➡

## If the ice looks thin . . . it probably is

Each year Rockefeller carpenters construct a temporary ice skating rink on the tennis court for all to enjoy.

Unfortunately, some people test the ice when it is just beginning to freeze—breaking through the thin surface and leaving foot-sized holes that remain when the ice finally hardens. Dodging these holes can make skating more work than fun. This year Facilities Management requests that everyone keep off the ice until it is hard-frozen. ➡➡



**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.