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news & notes

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The Rockefeller University

Friedman to give Mirsky lectures



Rockefeller scientist and librarian Alfred E. Mirsky established the university's Christmas lectures for high school students in 1959.

Professor Jeff Friedman, associate investigator of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute, will speak on "Genes, the Genome Project, and the Regulation of Body Weight" at the annual Alfred E. Mirsky Christmas Lecture Series on Science for high school students Tues., Dec. 26 and Wed., Dec. 27. The university has invited more than 300 high schools in the tri-state region to select students to attend.

In the first lecture, Friedman will discuss basic genetics, beginning with the 19th century work of Gregor Mendel, tracing the development of the field with the discovery at Rockefeller in the 1940s that genes are made of DNA, and explaining how genes convey instructions for growth and development. In the second Tuesday lecture, he will overview the Human Genome Project.

In the third lecture, on Wednesday morning, Friedman will discuss scientists' progress in learning about how brain chemistry, body physiology, and genetics each influence weight. He will end the series with a presentation on his work with the *obese* gene. Last summer, Friedman and his colleagues reported that the product of this gene, a protein they called leptin for the Greek word *leptos* meaning thin, helped genetically fat mice drop 30 percent of their weight in two weeks. Friedman will discuss this research, the cloning of the obese gene, and studies of other genes known to influence weight.

Friedman graduated from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute magna cum laude and received his medical degree, at age 22, from Albany Medical College of Union University in Albany. He earned his Ph.D. from Rockefeller in 1986 and immediately joined the faculty, becoming professor in June 1995. He is head of the Laboratory of Molecular Genetics and director of Rockefeller's new Starr Center for Human Genetics.

The lecture series was established in 1959 by Mirsky, a biochemist and Rockefeller librarian. He modeled the lectures on another popular series of science lectures for children in London, pioneered in 1827

See *Mirsky*, page 4

Cogs of the clock

Molecular geneticist discusses two proteins that help *Drosophila* keep time

Michael W. Young, Rockefeller professor and Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) investigator, discusses "Molecular Control of Circadian Rhythms in *Drosophila*" at the Friday lecture today (Dec. 8).

Young studies the genetic basis of the sleep/wake cycle, or circadian rhythms. In a trio of papers in the Nov. 3 *Science*, Young and his colleagues described how two proteins in *Drosophila*, PER and TIM, work together to control circadian rhythms in the fruit fly. Young's laboratory originally cloned the two genes that produce these proteins, *period* (*per*) and *timeless* (*tim*). One of these genes, *timeless*, was also discovered by his laboratory.

Rhythmic transcription of these genes is controlled by the PER and TIM proteins in the cell nucleus. However, these proteins must bind to each other to gain access to the nucleus, and this takes time. According to Young, the pace of the clock appears to stem from the gradual, coordinated accumulation of the *tim* and *per* RNAs during several hours, as well as the attraction of the PER and TIM proteins for each other, but only when they are highly expressed. Because the genes that control fundamental body mechanisms are passed on in



Professor Michael Young gives the Friday lecture today (Dec. 8).

evolution, a similar process may control the body clocks of humans.

Young received a Ph.D. from the University of Texas at Austin in 1975, working with Burke Judd on the genetics and cytology of *Drosophila* chromosome structure.

See *Young*, page 4

Kreek gives talk on biology of addiction



Professor Mary Jeanne Kreek (right, front) spoke on "Drug Addiction: Medical Research Seeks Solutions" at a special breakfast meeting of the Rockefeller University Council, Thurs., Nov. 30 in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller dining room. Before her presentation, she greeted council member Robert Forbes. Carl Hess (second from left), who serves on the council's executive committee, and Richard Furlaud, chairman of the Board of Trustees, also attended the meeting, which was sponsored by council executive committee member Alan Batkin (not shown).

2 University thanks employees

3 Nursing students discover research

4 E-mail users ponder storage

University hosts holiday party



Everyone on campus is invited to join the university's holiday celebration Thurs., Dec. 21, from 2:30 to 4:30 P.M. in Weiss Café.

Food, drink, and fun are promised, and children are welcome.



To accommodate the party, Weiss Café lunch service will be limited to take-out sandwiches from 11:30 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. Breakfast service will be as usual.



High fidelity

November ceremonies honor long-term commitment at RU

At two university ceremonies in November, 52 members of the RU community celebrated employment anniversaries of 10, 20, 25, 45, and 55 years, and 15 more marked their retirement. Some 160 people attended the anniversary-retirement dinner, held Thurs., Nov. 16 in an elegantly appointed Weiss Café. The Employee Recognition Program, Wed., Nov. 29, drew about 180 well-wishers and celebrants to Abby Aldrich dining room and lounge, where all reminisced about good times and good friends and anticipated future anniversaries.



Twenty-year veterans of Rockefeller (from left to right) Florence Arwade, administrative secretary, Raymond Fastiggi, associate director for finance at the Rockefeller University Press, and Elizabeth Jabbour, secretary, watched as fellow honorees received tokens of appreciation at the Employee Recognition Program. Fastiggi said, "I've worked with a lot of good people over the years. Five of us at the press have been here 20 years. I look forward to another 20."



Weiss Café served as a gracious backdrop for the dinner.



Professor Ralph Steinman (left) accepted congratulations from President Torsten Wiesel (right) at the dinner as Virginia Huffman, director of personnel, enjoyed Steinman's remarks about his quarter of a century at Rockefeller.



Louise Verbsky (right), accounts payable clerk in the Controller's Office, and John J. Harrigan, controller, examined the Rockefeller University seal etched into the bottom of Verbsky's Tiffany crystal bowl, her gift for 20 years of service.

Retirement honoree Lessie Stone keeps coming back to RU

Lessie Stone, who retired as a lab helper in December 1994, joined Rockefeller in 1952. She worked in the now-defunct faculty dining room, left after six years to marry and raise a family, and returned two decades later to work here for another 15 years.

"The wages were much better than what I would have earned anywhere else," she recalled two weeks after the university honored her at the November anniversary-retirement dinner. Her daughter accompanied her to the dinner. "And when I first came, we had only old buildings, with red tops."

While working as a homemaker, Stone would visit campus sometimes to lunch with her cousin. As her children grew up, so did the campus. "I watched many buildings go up. When I came back, it was a whole new campus."

That was in 1980. She got a job in the lab of David Luck, now a professor. She recalled, "I said to him, 'If you give me a chance, I'll do my best.' He did, and it worked out. I washed plates and kept equipment clean for him. He was a

very good boss. I liked working in that lab most of all."

"Lessie understates her contribution to our laboratory," said Luck, "She prepared our cell cultures, knew how to make them grow, and carried out a variety of tasks that made her essential for our work."



Lessie Stone first worked at Rockefeller in 1952. She retired in late 1994 and has returned several times to visit friends.

Stone retired on the advice of her doctor. "I would rather be working," she said. She still comes back to visit though. "I like seeing my friends."

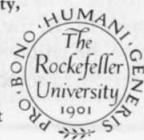
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A student at heart Professor emeritus Vincent Dole, still learning after all these years

Nominally retired, Professor Emeritus Vincent P. Dole, who celebrated his 55th anniversary at Rockefeller at the anniversary-retirement dinner this year, spends his days studying math, the theoretical underpinnings of electrochemistry to be precise. He majored in math as an undergraduate at Stanford University, but pursued a degree in medicine at Harvard University because, "Math was too limited. It excluded the phenomena of living systems."

Joining Rockefeller in 1941, Dole conducted path-breaking studies of the metabolic and health effects of salt and fat in the blood. His work, resulting in the now-widespread use of a low-salt diet as a way to treat high blood pressure, earned him awards and honors and a full professorship in 1954. But, he recalled in a recent interview, "I became bored with being an expert, with hearing myself say the same things again and again." So he once again changed his major.

"It was the early sixties, and



At the Rockefeller anniversary-retirement dinner, President Torsten Wiesel (left) celebrated Professor Emeritus Vincent Dole's 55 years of study and achievement.

New York had an epidemic of drug abuse, which was not adequately addressed by the medical profession," he explained. "It was an opportunity and an obligation." With psychiatrist Marie Nyswander, whom he later married, and Mary Jeanne Kreek, then an intern at New York Hospital and now an RU professor, Dole pioneered the use of methadone for

the management of heroin addiction. Following pilot studies at The Rockefeller Hospital, methadone maintenance was adopted in hundreds of programs worldwide.

"The great privilege of being a professor here was the freedom to follow your interests. We were never locked into a narrow category," said Dole. "Before I began to consider a study of addicts in the

Hospital, I had the benefit of a careful legal survey by university counsel. We needed to know our rights as licensed physicians to prescribe narcotic medications for addicts. The brief was reassuring. We were within our legal rights. I told Detlev Bronk [RU's president then] that this was a social and legal problem that had been considered too difficult to be studied outside of a federal prison, but in fact I believed that we could conduct an unobtrusive study that would answer some important clinical questions. He replied, 'If that is the case, then it will be our problem.'

"The annual anniversary-retirement dinner is my favorite function. We get a chance to celebrate the university as a whole and to recognize the people in a variety of jobs, the services that make this an effective institution." Dole added, "René Dubos [a former RU scientist] said it best. He said, 'Rockefeller is a place where an investigator can be better than he really is.'

Nursing interns at Hospital learn about research environment

"You have to be a perfectionist to be a nurse in a research environment," is one conclusion drawn by nursing student Debra Lesar who recently completed a graduate practicum at The Rockefeller University Hospital. "Until now, I've just drawn bloods, but here I saw how each cc is used for different tests. I understand why the exact amount you draw is important."

Lesar and Karen Castello, registered nurses enrolled in the master's program in medical/surgical nursing at the Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, learned many such lessons this fall through a Hospital program that welcomes interns from several local colleges.

"Nursing students have few opportunities to see research facilities. This program exposes them to the excellence demanded by an advanced practice environment," said Tara Cortes, chief nursing officer at the Hospital, who coordinates the program, which has brought 15 interns to RU in its five years.

This semester, Lesar and Castello took a course at Hunter on "Concept Clarification." They chose a theoretical concept and explored it in a population of patients. Both women chose to work at the Hospital with HIV



Debra Lesar, a graduate student at Hunter-Bellevue School of Nursing, gave a presentation at the RU Hospital Tues., Nov. 28.

patients in outpatient protocols.

"In exploratory studies, researchers assess patients qualitatively," said Assistant Professor Sue Neville, their teacher. "The next step would be to validate their ideas and findings with research. Both of them did work that can serve as a basis for a valid study."

Lesar chose to explore fatigue and Castello chose coping.

"Fatigue is a word everyone uses but it's a subjective term without a universal definition you can use clinically," Lesar told an audience of RU nurses at a required presentation Tues., Nov. 28. "Within nursing practice, there is no standard intervention that reduces fatigue."

Lesar interviewed participants in Associate Professor Gilla Kaplan's protocol testing thalidomide as a treatment for wasting associated with the late stages of AIDS.

"Everyone was willing to talk to me," Lesar noted. Based on her readings and observations, she suggested that nurses might encourage patients suffering fatigue to keep a diary that would pinpoint the times and reasons for periods of tiredness. Based on the diary, patients could ration their energy.

Lesar had a host of practical suggestions for a clinical intervention for fatigue, such as helping patients decide what to keep by their bedside, assisting them in following an

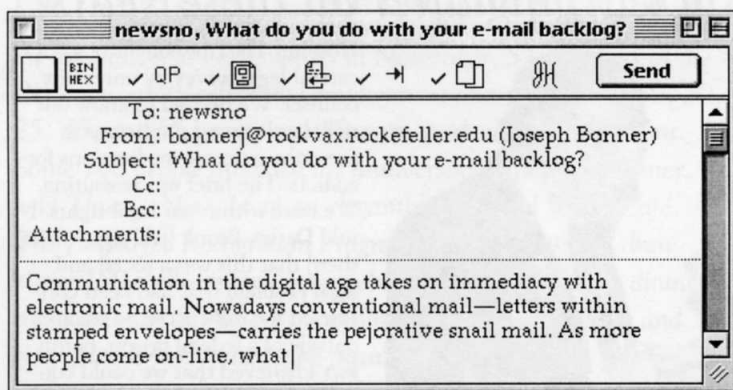
energy-producing diet, and planning routines that enable them to conserve energy yet accomplish daily goals.

To explore coping, Castello interviewed patients who had received the diagnosis of HIV infection within the past year. She found that patients participating in a randomized drug trial aimed at treating HIV-infected patients generally coped effectively. "They maintained control and optimism, sought information, and weren't abusing drugs and alcohol, taking risks, or withdrawing. They all had a lot of social support. Nursing strategies could encourage proactive behavior, like seeking out support groups and information and methods of identifying and reducing stress."

"The study of behavior and compliance is an essential ingredient of research on human subjects. Without accuracy in nursing observation and nursing participation, scientific data are less likely to be valid," noted Jules Hirsch, physician-in-chief at the RU Hospital.

Reflecting on her visit, Castello said, "Of course, we explored our concepts and learned a lot, but this place really changed my attitude about research. Now it seems like something I might want to do."

Byting off more than you should store: What we do with our e-mail backlog



do you do with the bytes of virtual correspondence that pile up on your hard drive?

Paul Rosen, manager of desktop computing and electronics in Computing Services, suggests the same type of safe computing techniques for e-mail that everyone should practice for all their files:

weed out and back up. "E-mail takes up space just like any other file on your computer," said Rosen. "To reduce clutter, delete as much unimportant mail as you can, then back up the important stuff."

According to Francis C. Lees, chief information officer, e-mail usage is rising. "There has been a

significant increase in the flow of mail in and out of the university's mail server," said Lees, who tracked e-mail traffic for the past two years. Lees's chart shows that in the past year, about 12,000 messages a week were received from locations on the Internet outside of RU, up from 10,000 the year before. Within the campus community, nearly 25,000 messages each week were sent to roughly 1,000 networked computers, an increase of 25 percent.

Olive Smith, administrative assistant in the Hospital, manages to keep her electronic inbox clutter free. "Usually I print a copy of the e-mail after I receive it," said Smith, who coordinates many of the Hospital's seminars. "After I've confirmed the speaker's information and arranged the announcements—and then reconfirmed this information—I delete the e-mail."

For others, like Assistant Professor Robert Masure, e-mail is not ephemeral. Masure, who archives most of his mail, said, "I wonder what will happen in the future, when most correspondence will be electronic data. Today you can read the collected letters of Abraham Lincoln. Will we be able to read a collection of Bill Clinton's e-mail?"

Jeanne Holcomb, administrator in the Greengard lab, doesn't have a problem managing her e-mail: She rarely uses it. Remembering when the pace of work was less hectic, Holcomb said, "In some ways, it's more civil than a phone call because you can make a request of someone and not interrupt them. And if you couldn't get to something right away, you could always blame it on the post office. I miss all those pretty stamps."

Potpourri

Toy donations

The RU Children's School and Infant-Toddler Center are collecting new, unwrapped toys for contribution to the Yorkville Common Pantry. Bring donations to the Children's School in GSR by Mon., Dec. 11. Media Resources Service Center is accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys for the Marine Corps Reserve's Toys for Tots program until Thurs., Dec. 21.

Health lecture

Andrew Lin, associate professor at the University of Alberta, Canada, discusses "Sunscreens to Moisturizers: Smart Skin Care from Summer to Winter" at the Sound Body/Sound Mind lecture Tues., Dec. 12 at noon in Caspary Auditorium.

EAPC workshop

The Employee Assistance Program will give a workshop on "Holiday Blues and Stress," to employees of the tri-institutions and their dependents Tues., Dec. 12 at noon in Weiss 305. The workshop is free, but registration is required. Call 746-5890 to reserve a seat.

Patient-oriented Research Seminar

Gilla Kaplan, associate professor in the Steinman lab, discusses "Cytokine Regulation in Mycobacterial and HIV-1 Infections," and Steven Shiff, assistant professor in the Hirsch-Leibel lab, will discuss "The Colonic Epithelium: Nutritional and Pharmacologic Effects" at the Patient-oriented Research Seminar

Courtesy of the artist



Stella Simakova, piano, performs works by Ravel, Brahms, and Chopin at the Tri-Institutional Noon Recital today (Dec. 8). The concert, at noon in Caspary Auditorium, is free. All are welcome.

Wed., Dec. 13 at 10:00 A.M. in Nurses Residence 110B.

Clinical Research Seminar

Barry R. Bloom, '63, professor at Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, discusses "Studies on Pathogenesis and Protection in Tuberculosis" at the Clinical Research Seminar Wed., Dec. 13 at noon in Nurses Residence 110B.

President's House exhibit

Nineteenth and twentieth century Chinese paintings from the Mirsky collection and early views of the Peking Medical College are on display in the President's House Wed., Dec. 13 and 20 from noon to 2:00 P.M. Members of the university community who wish to visit the

exhibit may sign up at the Security desk in Founder's Hall. Group size is limited due to the small display area.

Holiday party

Pumice (the Rock That Floats) performs Fri., Dec. 15 from 9:30 P.M. to 1:00 A.M. at the Holiday Eruption Party in the Faculty and Students Club. Admission is free. Contact club manager Pat Griffin, x8078, for more information.

Grant deadlines

All applications due between Mon., Dec. 25 and Mon., Jan. 1 should be brought to the Office of Sponsored Programs Administration by Wed., Dec. 20 at 3:00 P.M. for review and signature. Voice mail messages left at x8054 during the holiday week will be promptly answered.

Young

(continued from page 1)

He was an NIH Postdoctoral Fellow in David Hogness' lab at Stanford University School of Medicine from 1975 to 1977. Young joined the Rockefeller faculty in 1978 as an assistant professor and university fellow. In 1984 he was promoted to associate professor, and in 1988, to professor. He began his affiliation with HHMI in 1987 as an associate investigator and became investigator in 1989.

Young, who was an André and Bella Meyer Foundation Fellow from 1978 to 1987, is a member of several academic and professional organizations, including the Genetics Society of America, the New York Academy of Sciences, the Harvey Society, and the Society for Research on Biological Rhythms.

The lecture will be held at 3:45 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium and preceded by tea at 3:15 P.M. in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Lounge. All are welcome.

Mirsky

(continued from page 1)

by Michael Faraday—called the greatest experimenter in the history of science. Since 1974, the Mirsky lecture series has been funded through an endowment provided by Mirsky's widow, Sonya Wohl Mirsky.

Tickets are required for the lectures, which begin each day at 10:00 A.M., in Caspary Auditorium. For more information, contact the Office of Public Affairs, x8967.