

12-13-1992

## NEWS AND NOTES 1992, VOL.3, NO.13

The Rockefeller University

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### Recommended Citation

The Rockefeller University, "NEWS AND NOTES 1992, VOL.3, NO.13" (1992). *News and Notes 1992*. Book 31.  
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# news & notes

December 11, 1992 Volume 3, Number 13

The Rockefeller University



One viewer from The New York Hall of Science watches the lunar eclipse progress from the 38th floor of Scholars Residence on Wednesday.

## RU provides view of lunar eclipse, one of darkest ever

The earth came between the sun and moon on Wednesday evening, casting its shadow across the entire surface of the moon in one of the darkest lunar eclipses ever. The spectacular occasion brought The New York Hall of Science to the 38th floor of Scholars Residence as part of a continuing exchange of resources with the university.

"In a typical eclipse, the sunlight coming from behind the earth travels through our atmosphere and throws a red glow or disc around the moon," explained Allen J. Friedman, director of The New York Hall of Science and former president of the International Planetarium Society. "This year,

however, there is no glow around the moon because of the tremendous accumulation of gases and dust in our atmosphere from the 1991 eruption of Mount Pinatubo. These particles have completely absorbed the red rays of the sun. The result is possibly the most total lunar eclipse in history."

From the large picture windows that run the length of the 38th floor of Scholars Residence, trustees of The New York Hall of Science and their guests had a clear view of the event. They watched as the earth's dark shadow gradually crept across the moon until the moon was completely engulfed. For one hour and 10 minutes, the moon vanished from the sky. Friedman took advantage of this interval to show the guests slides on the history of eclipses. During the hour that followed, the guests watched as the earth's shadow slowly retreated and the moon returned to full view.

Not only were the guests impressed with the unusual eclipse, but several commented on the unique vantage point offered by the Rockefeller building.

"When we saw the space offered by Rockefeller, we fell in love with it," said Michael Walker, manager of public relations for The New York Hall of Science. "It offers awesome viewing possibilities."

University in 1959 when Alfred E. Mirsky, a biochemist who was also the university's librarian, organized a series of Christmas lectures for young people. Mirsky was inspired by the scientific lectures begun by Michael Faraday in 1927, which were held at Christmastime at the Royal Institution of Great Britain. Faraday was convinced that young people could gain an appreciation of the power and beauty of science

See *Students*, page 2

## Young students to hear Mirsky Christmas Lectures

A select group of high school students from 80 schools in the tri-state area will come to The Rockefeller University on Mon., Dec. 28 and Tues., Dec. 29 for the 33rd annual Alfred E. Mirsky Christmas Lectures on Science. They will hear Professor David Baltimore speak on "A Little Information Can Pack a Big Wallop: The World of Viruses."

Baltimore's lectures will begin Monday in Caspary Auditorium with a talk entitled "Viruses: The Smallest Form of Life," which will discuss the duplication of viruses and their many different life-styles. Next, Baltimore will speak on "RNA from RNA: Poliovirus," using the poliovirus to illustrate the mechanisms underlying the evolutionary success of viruses.

On the second day of the series, Baltimore will deliver a talk entitled, "Viruses Lead Us to the Genes that Cause Cancer," which will focus on cancer-inducing viruses. The series will conclude with a lecture on "The Most Awful Virus: Human Immunodeficiency Virus," in which Baltimore will discuss the challenge of designing drugs or therapies to conquer this new world-wide epidemic.

The Mirsky Christmas lecture series began at The Rockefeller

## University takes prompt action in wake of burglaries

Six apartments in Scholars Residence have been burglarized in the last two weeks, four of them on Monday. Campus security and the university's Housing Office are taking immediate action to tighten security and to resolve the situation.

"All the burglaries occurred while tenants were away from home," said Joseph Nekola, director of security. "Small personal effects and other items that are easy to conceal were taken. There were no signs of forced entry, suggesting that a key was used."

Bill Howe, director of housing, sent a memo to all tenants of Scholars Residence and the adjoining Faculty House on Tuesday, informing them of the burglaries and outlining his

response to the situation.

"This is a major problem for all of us that requires both immediate and more deliberated action," he said. "In terms of an immediate response, we have obtained Rockefeller Security coverage within the building and have arranged for the immediate replacement of the affected apartments' locks. We hope to be in a position to start implementing permanent security improvements within the next several days."

Both Nekola and Howe suggest that tenants of Scholars Residence and Faculty House secure their valuables and double lock their doors.

Both the police and the Security Department are continuing to investigate the burglaries. Anyone

with information that could be helpful to the investigation should contact Security, x8506. Anyone with suggestions on how to improve apartment security should contact the Housing Office, x8500.

In response to the increased threat of crime during the holiday season, Fred Bohen, executive vice president, has directed the university's Security Department to tighten access to the campus by asking for identification from individuals whom they do not recognize as familiar. He asks all members of the community to keep an eye open for suspicious individuals or strange behavior and to bring any concerns promptly to the attention of the 24-hour Security staff, x8506, on the first floor of Founder's Hall.

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2 'Elves' deck the halls of RU

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3 Shops keep labs on cutting edge

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4 Donations of food, clothing needed

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Kate Cameron, manager of furnishings and interiors, decorates one of the Christmas trees on campus.

## University's 'elves' deck the halls of RU

"Decorating the campus for Christmas is my favorite job of the year," says Kate Cameron, manager of furnishings and interiors, who oversees campus trimmings each year.

This season, Cameron and her "elves" have been busy decking the halls with live and artificial fir trees, wreaths, and poinsettias. Cameron's elves include Maintenance workers, who anchored the trees outside of Founder's Hall and hooked up the lights; carpenters from the Carpenter Shop, who built a wooden platform for the tree outside the President's House; and painters from the Paint Shop, who flame-proofed a tree for the Hospital's third floor. Luis Matos of Custodial Service was especially helpful.

Once the trees are installed, they are then decorated. "Each tree has its own personality," said Cameron.

"Patients in the Hospital decorate their tree with their own hand-made ornaments, and the Lab Tree on the 17th floor of the Tower Building is decorated with ornaments collected from the labs, such as clamps and test-tubes."

Cameron had the idea for the Lab Tree two years ago, and takes pleasure in decorating the tree herself.

Cameron turns to outside help for Christmas wreaths and plants. For the past eight years, Beth Hastings of B.T.Hastings Floral Design has personally created all of the wreaths with a yearly theme. This season, the theme is apples and oranges. Wreaths have been hung on the front of Caspary Hall and on the front door of the President's House.

"I know people on campus care about these decorations," said Cameron. "Last year, I received several comments about the Founder's trees being too short and thin. People took the time to

think about it and made their opinions known."

Other holiday trimmings this year include decorated banners that will hang in the lobby of the Tower Building.

## Students to hear lectures on viruses

(continued from page 1)

from popular lectures.

The series at Rockefeller is considered highly successful and has attracted many young men and women to careers in science. When Mirsky died in 1974 the series was renamed in his honor, and an endowment to insure its continuation was provided by his widow, Sonya Wohl Mirsky, currently university librarian emeritus.

For more information, contact Public Affairs, x8967.

## Children rehearse for holiday concert

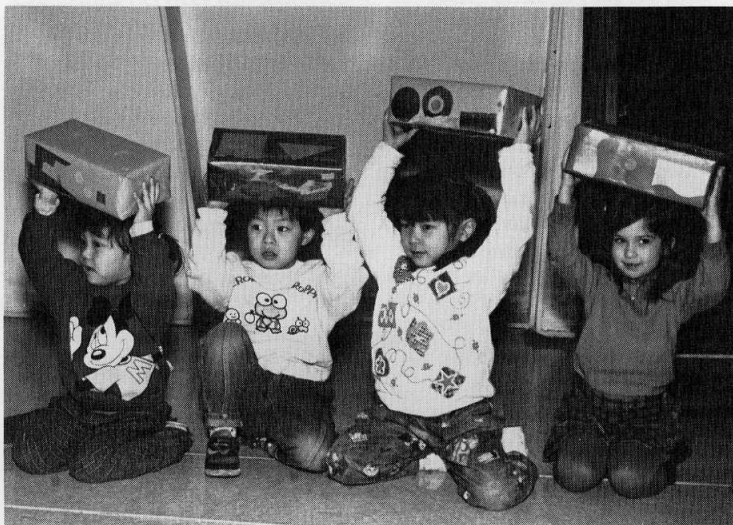
The Rockefeller University Children's School will regale the university with song and dance at its annual holiday concert, Fri., Dec. 18. The program will feature songs by each class, directed by music teacher Laurie Berkner, and a dance by the four-, five-, and six-year-old group, entitled "Our Presents" and choreographed by movement teacher Deborah Wanner.

Each year, Wanner creates a new piece for the show. This year, children will dance to music that combines segments of a J.S. Bach violin concerto with segments of pure percussion. "I wanted to design a dance that would help the children think about the differences

between musical styles," said Wanner at a rehearsal. "I think they enjoy remembering which body movements go with which style." The children constructed their own props for the dance.

When asked for a sneak preview of the songs in the concert, Abigail Call, age four, responded: "I'm not going to tell you what we're going to sing in the show because it's a surprise. But I'll tell you one thing, I'm sick of singing Jingle Bells!"

The concert will begin at 9:30 A.M. in Caspary Auditorium and will be followed by refreshments and home-made treats—some baked by the children. Admission is free. All are welcome.



Children rehearse for The Children's School holiday concert to be held next Fri., Dec. 18.

## Letters to the editor:

*News&Notes received a number of complaints about last week's coverage of the Second Annual Medical Complex Art show. Following is a letter representative of the issues raised.*

I am writing to let you know of my outrage over your piece and photo of "Madonna and Child." I cannot see how Mr. Gittleman can say that he "means no irreverence."

As a Christian, I find the portrayal blasphemous! To portray an important figure of Christian faith—the Virginal Mother of Jesus Christ—as the nude "popstar" is not only shockingly irreverent, but a disgraceful mockery!

Frankly, I cannot see how Cornell University Medical College allows it to hang, and, more importantly, I cannot fathom how *News&Notes* could have the nerve to address it and to photograph it!

Paula Desko  
Database Supervisor, Library

### Reply:

In printing last week's article and photographs showing three works of art displayed at the Cornell University Medical Library exhibit, we were endeavoring to cover the life of the university and to report on the diversity of interests of the people in our community.

*News&Notes* tries to maintain a balance between the important scientific research taking place on

campus and the outside interests and activities of our faculty and staff. The intent of our coverage was not to endorse any of the pieces in the show, nor to make a religious statement.

*News&Notes* apologizes to any members of the community who were offended by the coverage of the art show.

Thank you for taking the time to express your concerns to us. We hope that anyone with comments or suggestions on any topic will bring them to our attention.

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*News&Notes* is published each Friday throughout the academic year by The Rockefeller University, 1230 York Avenue, New York, NY 10021. Phone: 212-327-8967.

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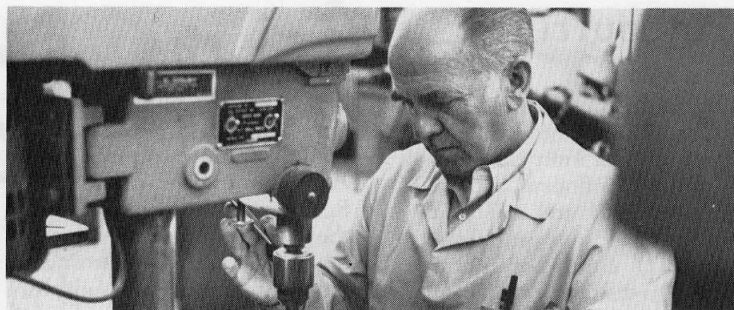
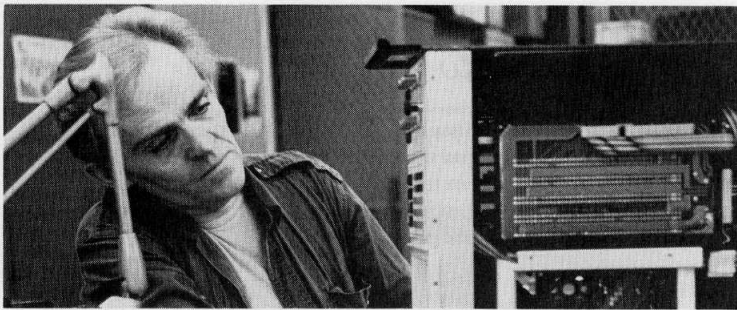
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The Rockefeller University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.







The Rockefeller University Instrument and Electronics Shops have helped create famous breakthroughs in scientific instrumentation. Here Bjorn Gullekson (*left*), electronics technician in the Electronics Shop, fixes the wiring of a waveform analyzer and John Doherty, supervisor of the Instrument Shop, uses a drill press.

## *A tale of two shops*

# Instrument and electronics staff keep labs on cutting edge

By Jennifer Horne King

Housed at either end of the B Floor of Theobald Smith Hall are two workshops—the Instrument Shop, buzzing with the sounds of lathes and milling machines, and the Electronics Shop, quiet with concentration.

At the north end of the building is the Instrument Shop, established by Herbert Gasser in 1935 to provide scientists with tailor-made instruments that could not be found commercially. Today, instrument designer John Doherty, who has been a part of the shop since 1956, oversees the design or modification of all sorts of scientific instruments, including vacuum pumps, stereotaxic units, and microscopes.

Currently, the shop is busy constructing a macroscope for Clay Reid of the Wiesel lab. The instrument, which, unlike the microscope, magnifies large structures, will be used by the Wiesel lab to view live fluorescent signals in the brain's visual cortex.

On a recent tour of the shop, Doherty pointed out some bright, shiny blocks of solid aluminum on a nearby bench. These are to be a part of the new macroscope. "These don't look like much now, but soon they will be carved out

into frames that can hold mirrors and lenses," Doherty said. "They'll be black too, so that they can absorb light, not reflect it."

Among the shop's famous breakthroughs in scientific instrumentation is a machine—commissioned by The Population Council—that makes intrauterine devices (IUDs). "Our shop produced the very first IUD machine that could manufacture the contraceptive devices," noted Doherty. "Now," he added, "we make parts for IUD machines around the world."

While the shop makes some instruments from scratch, it also modifies commercial items to perform additional functions or to operate in conjunction with other instruments. In addition, it repairs items no longer covered by service contracts.

At the south end of the B Floor of Theobald Smith Hall is the Electronics Shop where technicians pore over the inner workings of laboratory equipment.

President Detlev Bronk established the Electronics Shop in the early 1950s, when the development of electronic devices created a need to design, maintain, and upgrade the new equipment. In 1963, the shop was made a part of the Electronics Laboratory which

designs electronic equipment.

Recently, the shop found a way to repair computer video monitors that had been discarded. "The Electronics Shop found that in some cases, a high-voltage switch blows," says Paul Rosen, senior research associate for the Electronics Lab. "In under an hour, the shop can repair the switch and deliver the monitor to the lab, saving the university a lot of money."

In addition to repairing electronic equipment, the shop constructs devices designed by the electrical engineers of the Electronics Lab. "Because these devices are tailor-made, they have new features not found commercially. The innovation is what keeps our facility at the forefront of biomedical and biophysical applications," said Rosen. Mike Chen, chief engineer for the Electronics Lab, added, "The hardest part of the work is establishing the exact needs of the scientist. Then it's simply a matter of piecing together the programming or the apparatus."

The lab has been involved in a number of breakthroughs in research electronics, including the automatic amino-acid analyzer,

developed by Stanford Moore and William Stein in the 1950s, and a solid-phase peptide synthesizer developed for Bruce Merrifield in the 1960s. Both projects earned the investigators Nobel Prizes.

More recently, a device was developed for Michael Young's laboratory to monitor the activity of fruit flies. The system includes a special monitor—now commercially available—and a microprocessing program that manipulates large quantities of data.

While the Electronics and Instrument Shops are at opposite ends of the corridor, they collaborate on projects requiring both electrical and mechanical expertise. "When Miller and Dworkin were developing the biofeedback device for scoliosis patients in 1977, they wanted something small, lightweight, battery-operated, and reliable," Rosen said. "We helped design the electronic components, and the Instrument Shop helped design the spring-loaded switch and figured out how to fit the components into a compact module."

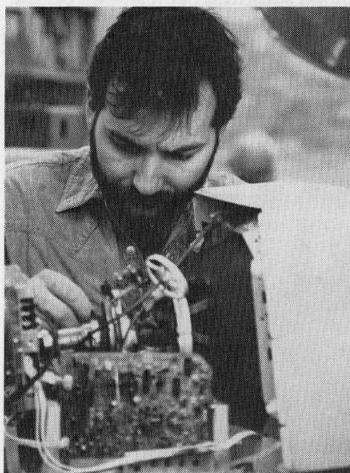
The Instrument Shop can be reached at x8590; the Electronics Shop, at x8611.

## Get ready for festivities!

This year, The Rockefeller University holiday celebration, open to everyone in the university community, will be held in Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Hall, on Fri., Dec. 18 from 3 to 5 P.M.

The party will feature special music, food, and drinks, and some wonderful surprises, according to the planning committee.

To facilitate the activities of the many people expected to attend, party-goers are asked to use the north entrance to the lounge or the lower entrance to Caspary Hall. Coats can be left in Caspary 1A. Handicapped access is still available through the main entrance. Children are most welcome.



*Left:* Mike Perrino, electronics technician, repairs a computer monitor's power supply. *Right:* Bill Tsang, Instrument Shop assistant supervisor, cuts a metal sheet with a milling machine.



## Potpourri

### Tri-Institutional Noon Recital

Before pianist Benedetto Lupo performs at Alice Tully Hall, he will play works by Brahms, Schumann, Debussy, and Bartok at The Tri-Institutional Noon Recital today (Dec. 11). One of Lupo's many awards is the bronze medal of the Eighth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, 1989. The recital, to be held in Caspary Auditorium at noon, is free and open to the Tri-Institutional community.

### Shutdown of 68th St. gate

Starting Sat., Dec. 12, the 68th St. entrance to the university will be closed to all vehicles except those making deliveries. Vehicles can enter or exit the north end of campus through the 66th St. gate.

The decision to close the gate was the result of an assessment by the Faculty Advisory Committee on Budgets. The change will save the university over \$150,000 per year.

Members of the university who wish to walk through the 68th St. gate need an encoded identification card. To obtain such a card, contact the Security Department, x8506.

### Sunday film

*Traffic* (1971), directed by Jacques Tati will be shown in Caspary Auditorium Sun., Dec. 13 at 7:30 P.M. Tati plays the character Monsieur Hulot, entrusted with taking a newly invented camping car from Paris to a motor show in Amsterdam. The trip becomes a series of comic encounters and mishaps. Admission is free. All are welcome.

### Software demonstration

Computing Services will sponsor a demonstration of CA-Cricket

Graph III, graphing software for the Macintosh, on Wed., Dec. 16, from 10:00 A.M. to noon, in Smith A21. Shari Zagorski of the Media Resource Service Center will give the presentation. It will cover basic data entry and formatting, creating common types of graphs, saving and using formats, error bars, regression curves, and preparing plots for output. The presentation is free but space is limited. Call Computing Services, x8935, to register.

### Retirement party

Charney Rattigan, dietary porter, will retire Dec. 31 after 20 years of service. A party will be held for him Wed., Dec. 16, at 2:00 P.M., in the Hospital A-level lounge. Contributions for a gift may be sent to Dacia Vasquez, Box H-37.

### Wednesday concert series

The violin, cello, and piano Buswell-Parnas-Luvisi Trio will perform works by Haydn, Beethoven, Shen, and Schubert at a concert on Wed., Jan. 6, at 8:00 P.M. in Caspary Auditorium. Admission to individual concerts is \$17 per person; \$7, for students of the Tri-Institutional community. A partial subscription for the seven remaining concerts in the series is \$100. For more information, contact Cathy Rogers, x8971.

### Lecture

Professor James M. Manning has been invited to lecture at the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science on two aspects of hemoglobin research being done in his laboratory. The topics will be the biological properties of hemoglobin prepared by the classical methods of protein chemistry for use as a blood substitute, and studies on the

## The season to give

The holidays are a difficult time for the hungry and the homeless. With this in mind, the university has extended its food drive of canned goods through Dec. 22.

Donations can be deposited in a receptacle near the main Security desk in Founder's Hall. Yorkville Common Pantry will distribute the goods to needy children and adults in the New York area. For more information, call Public Affairs, x8967.

The following organizations in the neighborhood also collect donations—clothing and toys as well as

food—and organize volunteers:

- All Souls Unitarian Church, 1157 Lexington Ave., at 80th St., 535-5530;
- Epiphany Episcopal Church, 74th St. and York Ave., 737-2720;
- Lenox Hill Neighborhood Association, 331 East 70th St., 744-5022;
- Neighborhood Center for Homeless People, 237 East 77th St., 861-0704;
- St. James Episcopal Church, 865 Madison Ave., 288-4100;
- Temple Shaaray Tefila, 250 East 79th St., 535-7597.

abnormal properties of sickle cell hemoglobin made in yeast by recombinant DNA technology. The meeting will be held in Boston Feb. 11 to 16.

### Repairs

Seasonal wear and tear has taken its toll on Faculty House and Scholars Residence. Scaffolding was recently erected on the buildings to repair the concrete that encases the reinforcement rods. Work will begin in March or April, when the warm weather arrives, and will last four or five months. The children's play area will be the first part of the building to be fixed so it can reopen as soon as possible.

### Birth

Milan S. Blake, associate professor in the Gotschlich-Fischetti lab, and Christa Blake, assistant for research in the F. Cross lab, announce the birth of a son, Richard Loy Blake. He was born Oct. 5.

### RU Press goes to Denver

Representatives from The Rockefeller University Press promoted its *Journal of Cell Biology* at a meeting of the American Society for Cell Biology in Denver, Colorado from Nov. 16 to 19.

### SRA changes

Participants in the Group Supplemental Retirement Annuity who wish to change the amount of their pre-tax contributions must submit a new salary reduction agreement to the Personnel Office by Mon., Dec. 21. Employees interested in enrolling in the plan, may do so at any time.

Supplemental Retirement Annuities (SRAs) enable employ-

ees to direct a fixed portion of their salary toward an annuity that earns interest—tax free—until retirement. Before the start of each year, employees with SRAs choose the amount to be directed to the annuity and authorize the university to reduce their salary by that amount. The outcome: reduced taxable income and increased savings for retirement.

For information concerning enrollment or to obtain a form, contact Maria Walsh, x8058, Ginny Hansen, x8299, or Darryl Williams, x8297.

### New withholding law

Starting Jan. 1, a new Federal law will require a tax withholding of 20 percent from cash withdrawals made by employees from Supplemental Retirement Annuities, Group Supplemental Retirement Annuities, repurchase payments, retirement transition payments, or fixed period annuities of less than 10 years. The law is not a change in taxation rules, but only a change in the rate of withholding. For more information, contact Darryl Williams, x8297.

### Copy card trade-in

Copy cards that no longer work in the library's machines can be traded in for new cards at the Media Resource Service Center. New cards are reusable—don't throw them out. Cards cost \$1 each, and can be encoded for varying numbers of copies at the Media Resource Service Center. A limited number of new cards is also available to Rockefeller University personnel from the Library Information Services Office for \$11, to be charged to a lab or grant account.



Professor Michael Young is editor of a new book, *Molecular Genetics of Biological Rhythms* (New York: Marcel Dekker, Inc.), which consists of 11 chapters by different authors including Young. The book can be ordered by calling 1-800-228-1160.