Scoop

UT-Houston Food Drive continues through Fri.,Oct. 12.

Friday, September 28, 2001

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

EVENTS TO KNOW:

➔ **Employee Relations Committee**, **"A Special Thank You" Reception,** for all UT Medical School Employees, 2 – 4 p.m. Wed., **Oct. 3**, Fifth Floor Gallery. Bring Employee ID to receive free gift.

➔ **Clinical Research Curriculum/ Intro to Clinical Epidemiology**, "Frequency-Surveys, Cross-Sectional Studies, Sampling Strategies" 5 - 6:30 p.m. Wed., **Oct. 3**, MSB 2.135.

➔ **Cardiology Grand Rounds**, **Dr. Sanjay Kaul**, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Los Angeles, at noon, Thurs., **Oct. 4**, MSB 2.135.

➔ **Health and Human Spirit Lecture**, **Dr. Jeff Levin**, noon Wed., **Oct. 3**, SPH Rm. 102 and noon Thurs., **Oct. 4**, MSB 2.006.

➔ **Annual New Faculty Orientation Luncheon,** 11:30 a.m. - 1 p.m., Thurs., **Oct. 4**, Fifth Floor Gallery.

FYI - Graphics Communications Group has relocated to the Medical School on the 7th floor, yellow section, MSB 7.436.

UTmost Interest

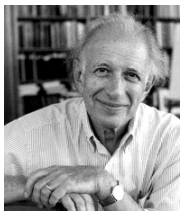
Dr. S. Ward Casscells, interim vice president, biotechnology, appeared on Channel 2, Wed., Sept. 26, to address Houston's readiness for terrorism, including chemical and biological warfare...**Dr. James "Red" Duke**, chairman, Southeast Texas Trauma Regional Advisory Council, called a meeting of local hospital trauma coordinators, many of whom are registered nurses (*Houston Chronicle*, 9-21-01)...**Dr. Charles Cox**, Pediatric Surgery, was quoted concerning issues related to medical professionals called up for military duty (*Houston Chronicle*, 9-22-01).

Hot News

GOOD NEWS! - The new temporary Gross Anatomy Lab is now open at the Operations Center Building (OCB), just in time for the second block of classes.

INAUGURAL KNOBIL LECTURE TAKES PLACE OCT. 25

The Inaugural Ernst Knobil Distinguished Lecture will take place at 4 p.m. Thurs., **Oct. 25** in MSB 3.001 with **Dr. Eric R. Kandel** as guest lecturer. Kandel's research is concerned with the molecular mechanisms of memory storage in Aplysia and mice. He has recently focused on the genetic switch for converting short-term to long-term memory and on how long-term memory can be restricted to be synapse-specific. The lectureship is funded by the Ernst Knobil Endowment Fund established in honor of the late **Dr. Ernst Knobil,** who served as Dean of the Medical School from 1981-84 (see *Scoop* issues 10-20-00 and 4-21-00). Kandel will address "The Molecular Biology of Memory Storage: A Dialog Between Genes and Synapses." He is a professor at Columbia University and a senior investigator at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. He has been recognized with the Albert Lasker Award, the Wolf Prize of Israel, and the National Medal of Science. In 2000, he received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine.



Dr. Eric Kandel

POSTERS WANTED FOR UT-HOUSTON'S RESEARCH DAY

Dean L. Maximilian Buja and the Graduate Student Education Committee are once again sponsoring a poster competition for graduate students working in Medical School laboratories. The competition will be run in association with UT-Houston's Research Day Fri., **Nov. 30**. Students are required to put up their posters (60 X 72 inches) 3 - 6 p.m., Thurs., Nov. 29 at the Hornberger Conference Center. Participating students will need to attend their posters for judging purposes, 2 - 3 p.m. Fri., Nov. 30. Awards will be bestowed at 4 p.m. To register for the competition, visit the Web site at <www.//research.uth.tmc.edu/ResearchDay/GSBS/register.html>. An abstract (approximately 250 words) also is required at the time of registration. Prizes will be awarded to the top three posters. The prizes this year will be $600 for first place, $400 for second place and $200 for third place. Registration will close at 5 p.m. on Tues., Nov. 27. For more information, contact **Dr. Diane Hickson-Bick**, 713-500-5328 <diane.l.bick@uth.tmc.edu>.

ANIMAL MEMORIAL SET FOR FRIDAY, OCT. 5

An animal memorial will be held at 3 p.m. Fri., **Oct. 5** in MSB 3.001. All faculty, staff, and students are invited to take time out to show their respect to the animals that were lost in Tropical Storm Allison. ID badges are required.

NATURAL STEP TRAINING SEMINARS IN OCTOBER

The Office of Facilities Planning and Development is hosting The Natural Step Training Seminar, 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Wed., **Oct. 10**, UCT 1505c, or 8 a.m. – 4:30 p.m., Thurs., **Oct. 11**, UCT 1525. For further information, contact **Shelly Comer**, 713-500-3415, or see the Web site <http://www.uth.tmc.edu/sustainability/tnsregister.htm>.

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HEALTH SCIENCE CENTER AT HOUSTON
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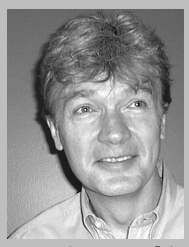
Produced weekly by the Office of Community Affairs and Public Education

Irish Coffee as an Antidote for Stroke

Strokes occur when a clogged (ischemic) or burst (hemorrhagic) artery interrupts blood flow to the brain. Stroke is the third leading cause of death in the United States and the number one cause of disability. An estimated 730,000 people suffer strokes annually. On the seventh floor of the Medical School, **Dr. Jaroslaw Aronowski** is mixing up caffeinated cocktails that doctors may one day serve to stroke patients. Aronowski, director of the school's stroke research, has been studying caffeine and alcohol as a potential therapy for at least two years. In low doses, the combination seems to work as a protective agent for the brain. The National Institutes of Health (NIH) recently awarded him more than $2.7 million to further understand how this novel treatment works. Two grants, titled "Novel Treatment of Stroke: A Combination of Low Doses Caffeine and Ethanol," and "Etiology of Cellular Damage after Experimental Stroke," both awarded by the NIH's National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke, allow Aronowski to study cellular mechanisms involved in damage produced by ischemic and hemorrhagic stroke. He and **Roger Strong**, a research scientist in the Department of Neurology, are part of a research team examining the use of ethanol and caffeine, how it works, and optimal treatment conditions.


Dr. Aronowski

"Little is known about how caffeinol works to reduce damage after stroke. These laboratory studies should help explain this curious finding and by so doing, may help us find even more effective treatments," said **Dr. James Grotta**, director of the stroke team at the Medical School. "The beauty of this type of therapy is that we all know that caffeine and ethanol are rapidly taken up into the brain and are reasonably well tolerated in low doses," said Grotta, holder of the Roy M. and Phyllis Gough Huffington Distinguished Chair in Neurology. "Furthermore, they are cheap. All this might lead to an easy to use, inexpensive, and effective treatment for a very common and difficult to treat condition." Grotta is currently conducting a dose escalation phase of a pilot study to determine the maximal tolerated dose of caffeine and ethanol in stroke patients.


Dr. Grotta

"Our overall hypothesis is that the neuroprotective effect of ethanol plus caffeine is based on the complementary pharmacologic actions of the drugs and that this combination therapy will potentially be an effective and safe treatment for ischemic stroke in humans," said Aronowski. Aronowski also commented that the caffeine and alcohol combination may not sound like the most sophisticated solution to the complicated pathology of stroke, but it appears to be working, and that's what matters. "We've gotten promising preliminary results," said Aronowski, who was recently appointed to the NIH's Brain Disorders and Clinical Neuroscience Study Section. "The neuroprotective effect of ethanol plus caffeine is very robust. There is almost an 80 percent reduction in ischemic damage. We're looking at genes to switch off the inflammation. Understanding the pathologic processes of cell damage and death after a hemorrhagic stroke may lead to therapies that improve the patient's outcome. We believe both of these studies will provide the necessary information to translate our experimental results to clinical therapeutic trials in human stroke patients."

- M. R. Middleton

Willerson Offers Extension for Eligible Faculty

Dr. James T. Willerson and the UT-Houston Executive Council have approved an initiative that allows for the extension of the probationary period of non-tenured, tenure track faculty whose research programs were detrimentally affected by Tropical Storm Allison. This measure was approved by the UT-Houston Executive Council as a means of support to those faculty who experienced significant losses.

Guidelines for applying for this extension are available on the UT-Houston Web site <www.uthouston.edu/gateway/research/index.html>. The guidelines also are being distributed to faculty in printed form with a cover memo reiterating Dr. Willerson's commitment to not only recovering from the storm, but also to rebuilding the campus in ways that enhance teaching, research and patient care. The application deadline is Tues., **Oct. 31**, 2001.

SECC Campaign Continues Through Oct. 19

The 2001 State Employee Charitable Campaign (SECC) runs through Fri., **Oct. 19**. Contributions can be made as one-time gifts, or through payroll deduction. For more information, contact **Lois Monroe**, <Lois.B.Monroe@uth.tmc.edu>.

Lunchtime Weight Watchers Class Ongoing

Weight Watchers has a class in the Dental Branch available for all UT employees. Class meets 11 a.m. - noon every Wed., Room 139. The fee is $159, payable by credit card, one check, or three checks for $53, all due now. For more information, contact **Sandra Gomez**, 713-500-4120.

Stroke Prevention:

News You Will Use Everyday in Practice Workshop, 8 a.m. – 3:45 p.m., Sat., **Oct. 6**, at the Galleria's Doubletree Hotel, 2001 Post Oak Blvd. **Dr. Lewis B. Morgenstern**, Neurology, will give opening remarks and an overview. Topics to be covered at the workshop include evaluating the efficacy of antiplatelet and anti-thrombosis drugs for stroke prevention; describing the benefits for management of lipids in stroke; and managing patients with cardioembolic risk for stroke. Category 1 credit offered; registration is $135; discount for UT-H faculty. Call 713-500-5128; Web site is <www.uth.tmc.edu/cme/update-sympos/stroke2001.htm>.