



Scoop

June 28, 2002

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

July

9 Mobility Program Kick-off Meeting, noon, MSB 2.006. Beginning **Sept. 1** the program will subsidize 100 percent of the cost related to METRO bus passes, METRO Park-n-Rides, and Van Pools.

11 Texas Medical Center Food Drive, 11 a.m. - 2 p.m., TMC Library Lawn, music, refreshments. Proceeds benefit the Houston Food Bank.

Open Enrollment Benefits Fair, 8 a.m. - 4 p.m., Fifth Floor Gallery.

UTMost Interest

Dr. Richard Smalling, Internal Medicine, was quoted in the *Houston Chronicle* (6-24-02) regarding the sudden death of 33-year-old St. Louis Cardinals pitcher Darryl Kile.

FYI - June 2002 marks the 10th anniversary of UT-Houston's Neuroscience Research Center. The charter of the Center, as established by the late **Dr. Ernst Knobil**, is to enhance and promote the neuroscience program of the Health Science Center. The NRC has many programs, including their growing Partners in Education public outreach initiative, to accomplish its goals.

FACULTY PROMOTION

All faculty and department administrative staff are invited to attend a Medical School Faculty Promotion and Tenure Process sponsored by the Office of Faculty Affairs, from 9 - 10:30 a.m., Tuesday, **July 9**, JFB G.709.

Find out about the criteria and steps in the promotion process, the responsibilities of the faculty member and department chair, the FAPTC review process, and curriculum vitae format and content. For questions, contact **Juanita Mattingly**, Faculty Affairs, 713-500-5103, or visit <http://deanweb.med.uth.tmc.edu/Faculty/index.html>.

RAO CHARTS COURSE AS PEDIATRIC CARDIOLOGY DIRECTOR

Dr. P. Syamasundar Rao, director, Division of Pediatric Cardiology, recently came on board with the UT-Houston Medical School. He is charged with developing a pediatric cardiology



Dr. P. S. Rao and his buddy Topper, a Memorial Hermann Children's mascot.

program here by **Dr. John Sparks**, chairman, Department of Pediatrics, and **Dean Max Buja**. Rao came from the Division of Pediatric Cardiology at St. Louis University School of Medicine. He is a pioneer in using catheter-directed interventional procedures to treat heart problems in children. He received his medical degree in India and became interested in the field of pediatric cardiology as he witnessed first-hand, surgeons at a loss to save the lives of babies with sick hearts back in the 1960s.

Early in his career, he experienced a three-day workshop with Dr. Helen Taussig, the "mother of pediatric cardiology." He became convinced that he should seek further training in the field and came to the U.S., completing his pediatric cardiology training at Stanford, Case-Western Reserve, and UCLA in the early 1970s. Dr. Andreas Gruntzig, a Swiss cardiologist, began working with a balloon angioplasty technique in the mid to late 1970s, and Rao wondered if the technique could be applied to children. In the late 1970s, Rao undertook a mini-sabbatical with Dr. William Rashkind, learning and researching transcatheter closure of heart defects. By 1982, Rao was working with balloon angioplasty techniques on pediatric patients.

One baby out of 100 is born with congenital heart problems. That translates into 30-35,000 babies each year in the U.S. alone. With catheter-based interventional pediatric cardiology procedures, up to 50 percent of babies who would normally need open or closed heart surgery, have been able to receive the catheter interventional procedures instead. Less time in the hospital, less money spent on procedures, no surgical scar on the chest, and most importantly Rao said, a better psychological outcome for both his small patient and his patient's parents, are the fruits of these less invasive procedures.

DEAN ADDRESSES BITTERSWEET STATE OF THE SCHOOL

Refreshments —Smarties sweet and sour candies — set the tone for the one-year anniversary of Allison town hall meeting June 19. **Dean Max Buja** explained how the last year has been bittersweet —“We survived Tropical Storm Allison and are continuing to fulfill our mission, but the storm took a great personal toll on those working at the Medical School.”

Through a pictorial presentation, Dean Buja showed how far the building and the employees have come this past year. He also noted that the other institutions in the Texas Medical Center who were severely impacted by Allison are in the same state in their efforts of recovery (See remainder of story on back page).



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DEAN ADDRESSES BITTERSWEET STATE OF THE SCHOOL (CONTINUED)

Recovery and planning efforts of the John Freeman building now may be included in the programming of the whole School because the John Freeman building will not be the site of the new Institute for Molecular Medicine (IMM), Dean Buja announced. Instead, the recommended site for the IMM building is two acres of land on Galen adjacent to the University Center Tower.



Dean Max Buja

“My intent is to have the John Freeman classroom walls fixed immediately to cut down on the noise between the classrooms,” Dean Buja said. Classrooms on the first floor of the building have been without Sheetrock on the bottom-half of the walls since Tropical Storm Allison. He also has requested that the Education and Executive Conference Center be brought on line for the use of major committees at the beginning of the academic year.

Plans for the reprogramming of the Medical School include moving all of the animals to the top floor—the penthouse—and having a small exercise facility in the basement. The cyclotron is still in dispute, but the Dean said he hopes it can be resolved and re-established elsewhere so that more space will be freed up in front of the building for future growth.

Because of mitigation efforts, which include moving electrical and air handling units to the ground floor, up above harm’s way, 17,000 square feet of space on the ground floor and in the basement will be lost. As a result, the School has leased space in the Jesse Jones Library building, and administrative and Dean’s offices will move there this summer.

Space analysis of the Medical School Building will continue as research needs expand and available space is scarce. More ground floor space will be realized when plans to extend the walls of the building on the ground floor out to the columns of the perimeter of the building are completed.

Other mitigation efforts for the building include raising the berms around the Medical School, installing aquarium glass in some areas of the ground floor, and possibly having retractable gates across Ross Sterling.

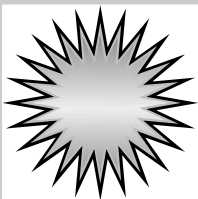
“The ground floor is 40 feet above sea level, yet the level for the 50-year flood plan is 47 feet,” Dean Buja said.

During the question-and-answer period, much discussion concerned UT-Houston’s new mobility plan, which will pay 100 percent reimbursement for all METRO and Van Pool costs for full-time employees. The program’s contact is **Janet Smith**, 713-500-3430, and an informational meeting will be held at noon, Tuesday, **July 9**, in MSB 2.006.

Security also was on employees’ minds. One question concerned the access between Memorial Hermann Hospital and MSB on the first floor. **Pico Mina**, vice president and chief facilities officer, reported that a part is on order and is expected to come in July so that a video camera may be installed in this area. Mina also advised employees not to hold doors open for those who do not have badges and reminded everyone to call FIXT—713-500-3498—for any mechanical concerns, including elevators that are not working properly.

JUNE EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH - NORMA ADAMS

Norma Adams, our June Employee of the Month, is an administrative assistant in Internal Medicine, Medical Genetics, and has been with the UT System since February 1989. She is in her 14th year here, having started out at UT Harris County Psychiatric Center as an administrative secretary to the director of accounting, **Joe Gordon**. She also has worked with **Dr. Marianne Marcus**, UT School of Nursing, and **Dr. Charles T. Van Buren**, Department of Surgery. One day she got a letter from

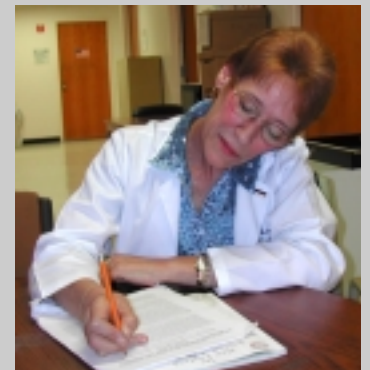


Chris Baca saying “You are now the administrative assistant of this Division.” Being a take-charge kind of person, Norma rose to the challenge of her new responsibilities. She presently oversees four large grants for **Dr. Dianna Milewicz**, who specializes in genetic research involving connective tissue disorders, such as familial aneurysms and Marfan Syndrome, to mention a few. “She knows I will take care of those accounts as if they were my own,” Norma said. “I think good chemistry between two people makes good results. Only two grants have not been funded. We make a fantastic team.”

When money amounting to \$15,500 was lost because of Tropical Storm Allison (a reagent went bad because of lost electricity), Norma promptly showed a doctor and his group how to undertake the process to recoup some of the losses. She also has led a workshop to cover the basics of TUFIMS and the Buy Card system for personnel.

Norma reconciles all accounts, monthly reports, and keeps a Doc ID log. She came through a recent internal audit with flying colors. From her travel reservation days, she has learned to back up, back up, and back up some more, all of her information. Norma now has the help of **Michelle O’Neal**, a senior support specialist.

Norma has a husband, four children, and seven grandchildren. In her downtime, she is partial to reading the mystery novels of Richard Patterson and John Grisham.



Norma Adams