



Scoop

April 28, 2006

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS MEDICAL SCHOOL AT HOUSTON

Events to Know

May

8 Vanishing Bits & Bytes: Preserving Information. 8:30 a.m.-4 p.m., SON. Visit <http://resource.library.tmc.edu/Conference.htm>.

15 Bridging Grant and Just Missed Grant applications due. Send to Kimberly.J.Campbell@uth.tmc.edu. Contact the Research Committee at 713.500.5605 for details and guidelines.

15 NIH 'K' Award Supplement applications due. Contact Kim Campbell at 713.500.5605 for details.

18 Advances in Teaching & Learning Regional Conference. 9 a.m.-5 p.m., SON Student Community Center. Visit <http://www.shis.uth.tmc.edu/TeachingDay/>.

24 Annual Faculty Meeting. 11:45 a.m.-1 p.m., MSB 2.006. Lunch provided for first 150 attendees. Live Web cast available for faculty at LBJ.

POSTDOC DISCUSSION

The Medical School's Fifth Floor Gallery was filled April 17 with more than 70 post-doctoral fellows attending the very first health science center seminar and dinner planned to offer them opportunities for career development training and to socialize with scientists outside their laboratories. The Office of Postdoctoral Affairs hosted the event. **Dr. James Knierim**, associate professor of neurobiology and anatomy, presented a seminar titled "Your First Year as an Assistant Professor: What They Don't Teach You Beforehand." **Dr. Maximilian Buja**, executive vice president for academic affairs, **Dr. Peter Davies**, executive vice president for research, and **Dr. John Byrne**, assistant dean for research, were in attendance.

2006 ALUMNI REUNION, HOMECOMING – A SUCCESS

Alumni representing the classes of 1976, 1981, 1986, 1991, and 1996 participated in last weekend's Medical School Alumni Reunion and Homecoming. Saturday events included a continuing education program, tours of new facilities, an update by **Dr. James Willerson**, president of the UT Health Science Center, dedication of the new Distinguished Alumnus Wall at the base of the grand staircase, and an evening reception and dinner. See *Scoop's* April 14 issue for an overview of all activities throughout the weekend and a profile of the 2006 Distinguished Alumnus.

Accepting the 2006 Distinguished Alumnus Award, **Dr. J. Christopher Farmer** ('82) thanked his family in attendance as well as the Medical School. Farmer was named the National Air Force Physician of the Year in 1996 and currently is a professor of medicine at the Mayo Clinic College of Medicine. Both his wife and sister are alumni of the Medical School, as well as a future family alumnus, his oldest son, **Chris**, who is completing his second year.



Alumni and friends reconnect at Reunion 2006.

During a special joint meeting of the Alumni Association Board with reunion participants in attendance, Willerson provided a timely overview and update of institutional accomplishments and formally presented the Distinguished Alumnus Award. Current president of the Alumni Association Board, **Dr. Alan Friedman**, provided an overview of the organization's accomplishments. **Resa Ott**, associate di-
(Cont'd. on back)

MEDICAL TRAINING COURSE PUTS ASTRONAUTS IN THE O.R.

On a space mission, astronauts don't have the convenience of dialing 911 or transporting the space shuttle to the nearest hospital for emergencies. However, a course offering instruction and hands-on medical training lends them the abilities to manage life-threatening illnesses and emergencies in space, while playing the roles of doctor and patient.

This unique field medical training program for astronauts, who are scheduled to be on the international space station, is offered through a partnership between NASA, Wyle Laboratories, Inc., Life Sciences Group, and San Jacinto College, where astronauts gain classroom instruction before meeting with Medical School physicians for their clinical experience.



Dr. Carin Hagberg (front center) and anesthesiology resident Dr. Charles Cowles (back center) met with astronauts and instructors at a recent medical training.

"The goal is to teach astronauts the procedural skills needed to care for anyone injured on the space station," said **Dr. Elizabeth Jones**, assistant professor of emergency medicine, who serves as medical director of the program. "This program gives them practice in the skills they would need in an emergency."

The program began in 2002, and three clinical courses are offered a year. The classroom instruction provides

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*A part of The University of Texas
Health Science Center at Houston*



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Students Learn Value of Screening for Domestic Violence

In the past year, have you been hit, slapped, kicked, or otherwise physically hurt by someone?

Medical students learned the importance of asking patients that question and others like it at an April 11 special presentation, hosted by the UT chapter of the American Medical Association/Texas Medical Association, called "How to Screen for Domestic Violence."

The presentation was organized by **Chirag Patel**, an M.D./Ph.D. candidate and current treasurer of the UT chapter of the AMA/TMA, and presented by **Dr. Laura Benjamins**, clinical research fellow who is designing a domestic violence curriculum for residents in primary care programs at the Medical School.



A Silent Witness display was assembled in the Leather Lounge.

Benjamins discussed the prevalence and effects of domestic violence, including intimate partner violence and child and elder abuse. She also discussed current trends, barriers, and recommendations for the physicians' role in screening for domestic violence.

Life-sized, red wooden cutouts from the Silent Witness National Initiative, bearing the names and stories of women who were killed because of domestic violence, were exhibited in the Medical School's Leather Lounge. The Silent Witness vision is to promote successful community-based domestic violence reduction efforts to reach zero domestic murders by 2010.

Benjamins defined domestic violence as a pattern of coercive behavior toward an intimate partner, roommate, or family member (including children, parents, and elders), which can include physical, sexual, economic, emotional, or psychological abuse.

She reviewed several statistics that compared the rates of domestic violence to those of illness and disease. For example, injury was the leading cause of death for children in Houston and Harris County in 2001. Moreover, the number of children who died from intentional injuries in 2001 equaled the number of children who died from cancer and was nearly equal to those who died from infection.

Astronauts in O.R., cont'd.

didactic teaching and mannequin training. Once completed, the astronauts participate in clinical training at Memorial Hermann Hospital where they do rotations with Medical School faculty – essentially taking what they've learned in the classroom to the operating room.

"We work on real patients in the operating room at Memorial Hermann," said **Dr. Carin Hagberg**, professor of anesthesiology and director of neuroanesthesia and advanced airway management.

Hagberg teaches the airway management part of the course. At a recent training, she led a group of astronauts in dealing with airway emergencies. "I gave a brief didactic session to find out what the astronauts wanted to learn," she said. "The two situations they were most concerned with were if someone was eating something and started to choke, or if someone had an allergic or anaphylactic reaction."

Hagberg's goal was to get the astronauts comfortable in securing an individual's airway, should an emergency arise on a space mission.

"Each astronaut learned some basic airway techniques, including bag and mask ventilation, direct laryngoscopy, tracheal intubation, supraglottic airway ventilation with a focus on laryngeal mask ventilation," she said, adding that special considerations need to be made for airway management at zero gravity.

The astronauts completed rotations with other Medical School faculty, including **Dr. James "Red" Duke**, professor of surgery and the John B. Holmes Professor of Clinical Sciences; **Dr. Donald Parks**, professor and director of the Division of Plastic Surgery; **Dr. Judianne Kellaway**, associate professor of ophthalmology and visual science; and Jones.

The astronauts were taught first aid, basic and advanced life support, IV insertion, Foley catheter placement, nasogastric and chest tube insertions, suturing, wound management, and patient assessment skills for trauma and abdominal pain.

"The astronauts are all highly intelligent and motivated," Jones said. "In general, when you teach them something, they retain it."

If the astronauts have to perform medical treatments in space, Jones said she hopes the training course will have given them the skills they need. "We hope that if there is an injury or an emergency on the space station, the astronaut will have the technical skills needed to manage it," she said. "So, when the physician back on earth tells the astronaut, 'place an IV' or 'suture the wound closed,' the astronaut will know how to perform the procedure."

Benjamins said that different factors go into a physician's choice whether or not to screen patients for domestic violence, such as lack of time, fear of offending the patient, or simply not enough education about issues of violence and the importance of screening. "My recommendation is to keep violence in your mind," she said.

Each student received a laminated pocket resource card with sample screening questions, contact information for area domestic violence assistance centers, and the domestic violence RADAR© guide developed by the Massachusetts Medical Society.

The RADAR© guide is a tool to help physicians when screening their patients for issues of violence. It stands for the following: R = Routinely screen; A = Ask directly; D = Document findings; A = Assess safety; and R = Review options.

"The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have made recommendations on what questions to ask patients," Benjamins said. "There are multiple reasons why people stay in a domestic violence situation. It's important to remember that it often takes several attempts for a person to leave a domestic violence situation. I really encourage you as physicians to use your radar."

At the conclusion, Benjamins engaged in a mock screening encounter with **Ann Bayliss** from the Domestic Abuse Center of Katy Christian Ministries, so students could see an example of how they could screen their future patients for domestic violence.

-C. Webb

2006 Reunion, cont'd.

rector of alumni relations, presented a preview of new Web-based communications programs that will facilitate future communications along with database capabilities allowing alumni to update their profiles and communicate with the Medical School and their fellow alumnus. Friedman noted the Alumni Association has been able to provide 21 student scholarships in the past year.

Tours of the renovated Medical School were a popular part of the event with the new Gross Anatomy Labs being a highlight. The evening reception and dinner was held in the Texas Medical Center Saturday evening at Trevisio.

-B. Boutwell

-C. Webb