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NIEHS Spotlight

2005 Spirit Award and Lecture



Shirley Malcom, head of the Directorate for Education and Human Resource Programs at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) was this year's recipient of the NIEHS Spirit Award.

A well choreographed, NIEHS-produced video montage highlighting impressive women who shaped national policy was an appropriate introduction for the articulate and accomplished woman who presented the 2005 Spirit Award Lecture March 31. Shirley Malcom, Ph.D, head of the Directorate for Education and Human Resource Programs at the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS) was this year's recipient of the Spirit Award.

In her presentation, "Women in Science: Making Choices and Taking Chances," Malcom drew from her own life experience growing up in Alabama to deciding what to major in, and where to go to school. She provided tips on being a successful scientist without giving up other roles – such as being a mom. The Spirit Lecture is sponsored by the Diversity Council at NIEHS.

NIEHS is Now NC 'Environmental Partner'

NIEHS takes its role as a steward of the environment seriously. That's why the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources' Environmental Stewardship Initiative seemed like a natural fit for NIEHS.

In January, NC DENR notified NIEHS that its application to the program was accepted.

The program has three levels of participation:

- Environmental Partner, which is the starting point for the broad range of organizations that want to improve their environmental track records;
- Rising Environmental Steward, for organizations with established environmental management systems, and
- Environmental Steward, for organizations with a demonstrated environmental performance record and a solid environmental management system in place.

NIEHS was accepted as an environmental partner. In about a year, NIEHS will report on its progress toward specific environmental goals that were defined in the application to become an environmental partner.

The program is completely voluntary, and NIEHS participation reflects its willingness to exceed minimum environmental requirements, said Scott Merkle, chief of the Health and Safety Branch.

The North Carolina program parallels federal mandates established via executive order during the Clinton administration requiring all federal agencies to establish an environmental management system by the end of 2005. The International Standards Organization established a standard for environmental management systems as well.

Merkle said an EMS is a process that details an organization's commitment to the principles of environmental stewardship. However, it also contains clear instructions about planning, checking and acting that are general enough to accommodate different types of organizations. It directs organizations to develop a system that will identify an organization or business' processes that affect the environment and create a parallel list of ways to mitigate those effects.

Merkle said NIEHS is aligning targets for improvements with the state program and those required under the federal executive order while keeping an eye on the ISO requirements, even though federal agencies are not required to comply with the ISO standard.

"If we, as an environmental institute, want to lead in this area, we should step up to the plate," Merkle said. The NIEHS involvement in the state program is another way to express the agency's commitment to environmental stewardship, he said.

FEB Functions Consolidated with NIH

Many functions under the Facilities Engineering Branch at NIEHS merged with NIH at the start of the federal government's 2005 fiscal year. The consolidation follows similar action that merged the Human Resources Management Branch and the Equal Employment Office at NIEHS with their counterparts at NIH.

Since NIEHS is the only NIH institute not physically located on the NIH campus in Bethesda, there are some functions – such as security – that will remain at NIEHS.

Another aspect that makes NIEHS different than other institutes and centers is the infrastructure that it shares with the Environmental Protection Agency. The original master plan for the NIEHS and EPA parcel in Research Triangle Park was developed in the 1970s. The master plan included a central utility plant for the entire parcel. Unlike most federal properties, which are owned or leased by the GSA, the NIEHS and EPA parcel was transferred directly to the federal government.

The parcel originally contained five sites deemed suitable for building. The main NIEHS buildings A through F are one site, Building 102 is another site, the main EPA building is the third, the EPA computer center and new daycare center, which is currently under construction, sit on the fourth site, and the last one contains the NIEHS ballpark.

Mitch Williams, security and operations program director in the NIEHS Office of Management, still runs some of what used to be the NIEHS Facility Engineering Branch. Some functions in that former FEB are now under the NIH Office of Research Facilities, while others remain at NIEHS.

Until recently, the NIEHS FEB operated rather independently of NIH, but NIEHS lacked construction authority. Most FEB funding came from NIEHS, Williams said. In fiscal year 2003, NIEHS FEB functions came under A-76 review. The solicitation resulted in a determination that the government was the most efficient operation, but that finding was challenged and more changes could come later, he said.

Under the NIH consolidation, most FEB staff transferred into NIH staff positions. The NIEHS is coordinating with the NIH on procedures for emergency planning and response and physical security that are now in effect for the NIEHS campus, Williams said. That means there are also more NIH resources to draw from to meet the additional requirements, he said.

Employees of NIEHS and EPA have a number of advantages under the arrangement: they can use each other's secure entrance gates, use the dining facilities, and attend employee enrichment programs on both campuses. NIEHS and EPA share the man-made lake and walking trails that separate the two facilities and they have a joint daycare center. EPA paid for expansion of the physical plant to accommodate the additional structures they constructed on the site, and NIEHS and EPA share operation costs. The two agencies also share incineration and waste-handling facilities.

Williams said there are financial incentives for the arrangement that benefit both agencies. They do not need to duplicate equipment, they can have a single contract between the two agencies to operate the utility plant, and reduced fuel consumption. The bottom line, he said, is there is more money left for research.

Negishi to Receive Honorary Doctorate from University of Kuopio



Masahiko Negishi, a scientist in the Laboratory of Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology in the Environmental Diseases and Medicine Program, will receive an honorary doctorate from the faculty of the pharmacy school at the University of Kuopio in Finland.

An honorary doctorate is the most prestigious acknowledgement that the academic community can bestow, said Helena Kantanen, secretary general of the ceremonies.

The ceremonial conferment will be June 10. The University of Kuopio holds degree ceremonies every fifth year.

Negishi, a visiting scientist and citizen of Japan, is the principle investigator in the pharmacogenetics section at NIEHS and is a member of the NIH Senior Biomedical Research Service. He received his doctorate in biochemistry from the Institute of Protein Research at

Osaka University in Japan and carried out postdoctoral training in the Department of Cell Biology at New York University and the National Institute of Child Health and Human Development. His major research interests are in the structure-activity relationship of drug-metabolizing enzymes and the regulation mechanisms of drug-induced gene expression.

In the 1990s he trained two postdocs from the University of Kuopio, and has since collaborated on a number of research projects with them.

NIEHS Recycled 75 Percent of Waste Stream Last Year

NIEHS successfully diverted 75 percent of its waste stream into recycling in the past year, said Dick Sloane, resource recovery expert for NIEHS. That is a total of 848,048 pounds of paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, pallets, metal and other recyclable material. Animal bedding is recycled into compost that is used on campus flower beds. Here are totals for the year, in pounds:

- White paper – 58, 430
- Other paper – 134,646
- Cardboard – 70, 296
- Glass – 7,296
- Plastics – 15,915
- Animal boxes – 9,745
- Disposable clothing from the animal area – 10, 905
- Wooden pallets -7,290
- Metal – 74,960
- Construction and demolition waste -238,834
- Animal bedding – 209,959

In addition, NIEHS recycled the pavement it replaced during that time period, adding another 2.9 million pounds to the total.



Science Notebook

Research Echoes: Zeldin Paper among 10 Most-Cited JACI articles in 2004

A paper by NIEHS researchers that was published in the *Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology* last summer was among the 10 most cited papers in media coverage for that journal last year.

Sam Arbes is the lead author and Darryl Zeldin, senior scientist in the Environmental Diseases and Medicine Program, is the senior author on the paper, “Dog allergen (Can f 1) and cat allergen (Fel d 1) in US homes: Results from the National Survey of Lead and Allergens in Housing,” which appeared in the July 2004 issue.

Other authors are Richard Cohn and Ming Yin, from Constella Group, Inc., Michael Muilenberg at Harvard School of Public Health, and Warren Friedman from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, Office of Healthy Homes and Lead Hazard Control.

Arbes said he believes the article got a lot of attention because it reported that virtually all the homes surveyed had dog and cat allergens, even though only a quarter of the households owned such indoor pets. In fact, he said, many of the homes without an indoor pet had allergen levels high enough to cause asthma symptoms in asthmatics who are allergic to dogs or cats. The question that emerges from the study: How do pet allergens get inside homes that do not own these pets? Arbes said other research has shown that dog and cat allergens can be transported on clothing from one environment to another. For example, if your pet-owning neighbors come to visit you, they will likely leave pet allergens on your couch when they leave. Also, Arbes said, dog and cat allergens are commonly found in places one would not expect them: schools, trains, buses, taxis, shopping malls, hospitals and even the offices of allergists.

Journal of Allergy and Clinical Immunology Senior Editorial Assistant, Cami Lind, notified the researchers their paper was among the top 10 most cited for 2004. The journal was estimated to reach 96 million people.

“This success, coupled with excellent research such as you has demonstrated, have served to raise awareness of the field of allergy and immunology,” Lind said in an e-mail notification of the results.

Taking a Global Perspective on Environmental Health

Technological advances like the Internet and wireless communication have dissolved national borders in many ways, opening the door for global economics and industrialization. As global aspects of economy, industrialization and commercialization increase, so does the potential for environmental health effects, said NIEHS Deputy Director Sam Wilson.

Wilson and NIEHS Director Ken Olden were instrumental in forming the Roundtable on Environmental Health Sciences, Research, and Medicine, a committee of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science. The Roundtable held a workshop last fall specifically to look at global environmental health from the perspectives of government regulation and corporate social responsibility.



NIEHS Deputy Director Sam Wilson

As globalization continues in economics and industrialization, public health must be considered from a global perspective as well, Wilson said, and that falls squarely in the middle of the NIEHS mission statement.

NIEHS's funding portfolio and interests have always spanned national borders, Wilson said. With the growth curve associated with the globalization of industry, there is a huge potential for contamination, Wilson said.

The term 'non-point source pollution' is used to describe contaminants released into the general atmosphere, affecting the air quality of not just the country of origin, but other countries as well. Pollution simply does not stop at national borders.

Mercury, for example, is released into the air by incineration in coal-burning power plants. It began showing up in food sources like fish worldwide. NIEHS is currently working with the U.S.

Geological Survey in a pilot project to map mercury 'hot spots' in the United States based on mercury levels in fish. PCBs are another example of a non-point source pollution that is released into the atmosphere.

The effects of non-point source pollution are global, and the problem must be addressed on a global level. Wilson said the globalization of private industry follows the sources of labor and natural resources in an attempt to secure the most cost-effective means of doing business. Industrial productivity and protection of the environment are both important elements of public health. Just as industrial policies and decisions impact global environmental health, so do regulations made in one country affect environmental health in other countries.

"We are at a time of great opportunity for ensuring environmental health and the impact of industry is just one piece of the pie," Wilson said.

NIEHS Authors in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences

The following manuscripts appeared in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences Online Early Edition for the week of March 21-25:

- “DNA precursor asymmetries in mammalian tissue mitochondria and possible contribution to mutagenesis through reduced replication fidelity,” by Shiwei Song and Christopher Mathews from Oregon State University and Zachary Pursell, William Copeland, Matthew Longley and Thomas Kunkel at NIEHS.
- “Bmpr1a and Bmpr1b have overlapping functions and are essential for chondrogenesis in vivo,” by Byeong S. Yoon, Isaac Yoshii and Karen M. Lyons from the University of California at Los Angeles, Dmitry Z. Ovchinnikov and Richard Behringer from the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center, and Yuji Mishina, NIEHS.

NIEHS Researcher: Top Paper in SOT's Reproductive Toxicology Section

Paul Foster, who joined NIEHS from CIIT Centers for Health Research, was honored at the Society of Toxicology annual meeting when his paper was selected Best Paper from the Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology Specialty Section of SOT. The paper, “Dose-Dependent Alterations in Gene Expression and Testosterone Synthesis in the Fetal Testes of Male Rats Exposed to Di (*n*-butyl) phthalate” appeared in *Toxicological Sciences* in May 2004. The authors on the paper: Kim Lehmann, Suzanne Phillips, Madhabananda Sar, Foster and Kevin Gaido.

Science Education Website, Cancer Booklet Win Plain Language Award

The NIEHS Environmental Health Science Education website and an NIEHS/NCI cancer booklet are 2004 Plain Language Award winners.

The NIH contest is designed to encourage a writing style that is easy to understand. Winners are rated as outstanding and excellent. It also lists honorable mentions. Both NIEHS entries rated excellent.

Team members for the Science Education website are: Liam O'Fallon, Beth Anderson, Sharon Beard, Michael Humble, Kimberly Thigpen-Tart, Susan Booker, Marian Johnson-Thompson, John Peterson, Lou Rozier, Gerard Roman, Stephanie Holmgren, Bill Jirles, Marcia Soward, Charle League, Darlene Dixon and Jackie Locklear.

Team members for “Cancer and the Environment: What You Need to Know, What You Can Do” are Nancy Nelson, Ellen Eisner, George Lucier, Ron Melnick; David Longfellow, Michael Alavanja, Diane Bloom and Susan Sieber.

The awards ceremony will be April 27 at the Clinical Center in Bethesda. The keynote address will be delivered by Judith Viorst, journalist, poet and author.

NTP Research Earns SOT's "Best Paper" Award

Researchers in the Laboratory of Computational Biology and Risk Analysis have something to smile about these days. Their paper, "Gene Interaction Network Suggests Dioxin Induces a Significant Linkage between Aryl Hydrocarbon Receptor and Retinoic Acid Receptor Beta" was selected Best Paper by the Society of Toxicology. The paper was published in the NIEHS journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*, in August 2004.



Paper authors from left: Hideko Sone, Nigel Walker, Fred Parham, on screen – lead author Hiro Toyoshiba, who has now returned to Japan, senior author and director of the Environmental Toxicology Program at NIEHS, Chris Portier, and Janelle Martinez. Not shown is Takeharu Yamanaka, who has also returned to Japan.

Jerry Yakel Featured on Native America Calling

NIEHS's Jerry Yakel was featured on Native America Calling on March 17. The following listing appears on the Native America Calling web site:

Thursday, March 17 - Brain Power: (Listen in RealAudio...)

March 14th through the 20th is "Brain Awareness Week," in the world. There are many organizations, researchers and doctors dedicated to the study of the brain. This week an international effort is underway to bring awareness about the progress and benefits of brain research to the public. What do you know about the human brain? What are your tribal teachings and philosophies about this part of your body? Guests include Dr. Jerrel Yakel, Senior Investigator/ National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences Department of National Institute of Health.



Jerry Yakel at an NIEHS event (file photo)

(To listen to the interview, go to: <http://www.nativeamericacalling.com/>. In the column on the left, click on "Past NAC Programs" and scroll down to March 17.)



After Hours

From Tins to Treasures: the Creative Side of Mark Evans Emerges



Mark Evans describes himself as a computer geek who got tired of messing with his computer when he got home from work. At work, incidentally, he messes with computers all day. In fact, he has been working with computers since he was 12 years old, when he started consulting for law firms, making a pretty penny doing it.

Evans grew up in Clinton, N.C., but left the day after he graduated from high school. He studied computer science at North Carolina State University, focusing on how people interact using computers. But, he said, it was being surrounded by creative people at work, in *Environmental Health Perspectives*, that inspired him to let the creative side of his personality out to play.

“I’m not a great painter and not very good at drawing so I am trying my hand at making art out of other people’s trash. Mainly, I’m trying to find a form of mental and spiritual release that gives me a fresh perspective and a creative outlet,” Evans said.

That creative outlet comes as he transforms disposable tin mint containers into personalized boxes. By the time he bestows them as gifts, he has done his utmost to represent the essence of the person to whom he gives such gifts.

“I like the idea that someone else is enjoying them rather than them just sitting on my shelf or in a drawer,” he said.

Some of the boxes are serious. Others are very light-hearted and fun:

- For his 10-year-old cousin, Evans created a “bug house” to encourage the child to put bugs in the tin then in his pocket instead of putting bugs directly in his pocket.
- For a friend who collects fortunes from fortune cookies, he created a “Fortunes Chest” or “Lucky Box” so labeled in Chinese.
- Evans’s cat, Spaz, has one too. His is a catnip satchel, which Spaz likes to bat around the floor.
- For a friend who is a genealogy buff, the tin became a transportable history book, with the family name on the lid, and an accordion of family photos inside.
- For other friends, the tins have become a party purse, an iPod holder, a wallet, a pill organizer, a “man bag” and a mini first-aid kit. Other tins become candles. Many of the completed tins have tiny collages on the covers.

Evans says he does it “just for fun” rather than as a serious art form, but he clearly gets a lot of personal satisfaction from his creations. Evans is working on creating a large display, in which he will display boxes he has got back from his friends. He made each friend a box with his or her name on it, and asked the friends to put things in it that are representative of themselves. When he gets them back, he will display them in a rack he has made from old wooden bed slats connected with a leather strap that hangs from his wall.

That way, Evans said, he can be surrounded by his friends even when they are not there.

In his creations, Evans strives to identify his perception of the person using items he adds to the tins. Among the elements he identifies as important to a person’s identity are their choices in music, their family, their job and their ethnicity. He said he is not as concerned about pleasing the person as he is accurately reflecting how he sees that person. Sometimes it is good for people to see themselves as other see them, he said.



Some of Evans’ creation, from the lefts: a bug house, made for a young cousin; a Simpson cartoon box; a fortune chest, labeled in Chinese; a “What you see takes what this holds” box that has pieces of mirror inside the lid, and stones labeled love, joy, faith, laughter and truth inside; and on the far right, a tin decorated with a friends’ artwork on the lid and a candle inside.

“The box can hold a lot of things. It can hold a lot besides the sum of the contents. It can hold emotions and spiritual things that can mean a lot to you,” Evans said.

Evans said he has completed some boxes in half an hour. For others, he has pondered the design concepts for months. A few he has thrown away instead of giving. Of those he has given, he said he has never had a negative reaction.

Walking the Walk: A Self-Guided Nature Trail

NIEHS now has its own self-guided nature trail. The trail, which follows a path around the lake NIEHS shares with the Environmental Protection Agency, has a total of 15 markers that correlate to information in a new NIEHS brochure – hence, the self-guided tour.

The trail leads around the man-made lake that serves as a collection basin for



rainwater along the flood plain of Burden Creek, which feeds the lake. The tour provides a crash course NIEHS history, too. For example:

The lake was shaped as NIEHS was built.

- Soil taken from the lake location was used as fill in the construction process.
- After the lake stabilized, it was stocked with fish, including crappie, large-mouth bass, hybrid striped bass and catfish.
- It is now home to turtles, Canada geese, Mallard ducks, American Coots, Great Blue Heron, and King Fisher. It is seasonally inhabited by ruddy ducks and the rare black ducks as well.

Maps for the self-guided tour are available on the NIEHS side of the lake near the Memorial Garden, which, as explained in the brochure, is an area dedicated to deceased NIEHS employees. It contains both native and imported plants.

The trail meanders around the 27-acre lake, each point on the map providing information about native plants, animal life and habitat, or history.

Dick Sloane, the recycling coordinator at NIEHS, along with Colleen Anna, Bill Willis and Mitch Williams created the



NIEHS from the EPA side of the lake

brochure.

Sloane has applied to the North Carolina National Wildlife Federation for certification under the Wildlife and Industry Together program, citing the nature trail as an education enhancement.

More information about the self-guided tour, including the new brochure, will be available at the Earth Day displays on April 21.



Did You Know?

NIEHS Career Counselor Offers Tips on Networking

The old proverbial career ladder has fallen by the wayside. In its place is a new tool: networking. According to Gordon Folger, career counselor at NIEHS who conducted a networking workshop March 9, networking is the key to career advancement these days.

An estimated 60 percent of potential jobs are not listed in traditional ways, and networking is the key to tapping the so-called “hidden job market,” Folger said. She said that research shows two-thirds of all jobs are located through word of mouth, referrals from acquaintances, friends or relatives, and other networking methods.

As opposed to a direct job searches using traditional methods of finding and applying for jobs, networking is about building and maintaining relationships for purposes of career information, advice, referrals and potential opportunities. The average person knows at least 200 people that he or she can draw from to construct a career network, Folger said.



Networking relationships are formed on a give-and-take basis, and effective networking relationships provide benefits and information to people on both ends. Networking interviews can provide valuable information on industry trends, formal and informal rules, answers to questions about the field or the job, and career advice. However, there are specific rules of etiquette that must be followed. Among them, respecting a contacts time, not using someone’s name without their permission, and developing and using scripts.

Folger said people who are looking to make a career change or find a job should spend half their allotted job-search time focusing on networking. At the workshop, Folger provided a packet of networking tools, including a sample networking letter, sample networking interview questions, sample telephone script, a 90-second introduction form, a career networking list that can be used to form the foundation of a career network, and a contact record sheet.

Folger provides confidential and individual career counseling, including personalized tutoring on creating and maintaining a career network, on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month. To schedule an appointment, call the NIH Work Life Center at (301) 435-1619.

Retirements

Kamal Abdo

Kamal Abdo has spent 24 years at NIEHS, most of it doing cancer testing. But these days, it's a different story. In response to a question about how he plans to spend his time, Abdo replied: "Goofing off."

That is allowed, now that Abdo is retired. It was official March 1. In addition to "goofing off," Abdo said he plans to travel to the U.S. Caribbean and Aruba, Australia, and when the political climate is more stable, visit his homeland in the Middle East. He will also spend more time with his wife, Jeanette, who is also retired, and their six children, all of whom live in the area.

Abdo said he intends to remain the Research Triangle area. As for his work at NIEHS, he said he will miss the collaborations and the teamwork within the Environmental Toxicology Program, Toxicology Operations Branch. His coworkers, he said, are like his second family.

Reflecting on his career, Abdo said he is proud of the work he did. The projects he worked on provided information that is important to public health and improves people's lives, he said.



Kamal Abdo, Toxicology Operations Branch, with fellow staff scientists Jack Bishop, left, and Po Chan. Abdo's coworkers organized a farewell luncheon in honor of his retirement.

Kay Kaufman



Kay Kaufman and husband Dave Winkler will be doing more skiing, scuba diving, camping and motorcycle touring in the near future.

Kaufman retired April 1 after 27 years of federal service. She started her federal career as an Air Force civilian, but came to NIEHS in 1989.

It was Kaufman who reminded everybody to complete their timecards, and sent out reminders about those oh-so-important pay-related issues.

Among Kaufman's fondest memories at NIEHS:

- The first fitness tournament when she chaired the nutrition committee
- Halloween costume parades in the C mall
- Craft fairs during the holiday season
- Diversity Council and other committee activities at NIEHS
- Line dancing at lunchtime
- Arranging and leading pony rides during family picnics
- Learning short form Yang style Tai Chi
- Learning yoga
- Being in charge of Ride Your Bike to Work Day
- Chatting with fellow garden enthusiasts and plant exchanges at Earth Day celebrations

But, Kaufman said, what she will miss most are her coworkers at NIEHS

Blood Drive Results

Sixty-two people, including one first-time donor, participated in the NIEHS Blood Drive March 2. Blood drives are schedule quarterly, and the next one is slated for **June 22**.

News Faces

Noboru Sato

Noboru Sato is a staff scientist in the Laboratory of Molecular Carcinogenesis.

Before coming to NIEHS, Sato worked as a pulmonary physician in Japan, treating patients suffering from idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis. Sato came to the U.S. to conduct basic research related to regenerative medicine. At Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center and The Rockefeller University in New York, Sato focused on the molecular mechanism regulating stem cell self-renewal using human embryonic stem cells as a model system. Sato joins Trevor Archer's group in the Laboratory of Molecular Carcinogenesis.



Keith Moore



Keith Moore is an administrative technician in the Office of the Scientific Director. He grew up in Waynesboro, Miss., but attended college in Georgia, where he earned a bachelor's degree in sociology from Clark Atlanta University. He is a member of Kappa Alpha Psi fraternity.

Moore joined NIEHS from the Center for Disease Control & Prevention in Decatur, Ga., where he was an information specialist. He also previously served as an administrative assistant at the CDC in Atlanta.

Wei Chen

Wei Chen is database administrator in the Computer Technology Branch. Before joining NIEHS, Chen worked for BB&T in Wilson, N.C. He has also worked as a database administrator for Progress Energy and Martin Marietta Materials in Raleigh. His specialty: Oracle and SQL Server.

Chen earned a bachelor's degree in physics at the Dalian University of Technology in China and a master's degree in physical chemistry from the Dalian Institute of Chemical Physics, also in China, and a doctorate in chemical physics from Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn.



Earth Day 2005: April 21

The Plant Exchange

Garden enthusiasts and novices alike will have the opportunity to pick up something green to take home with them. The annual plant exchange will be near the Rall Building flagpole. Plants can be dropped off from 8-9 a.m. People who bring plants to share will be allowed to exchange with others from 11-11:30 a.m., and the remaining plants, as well as a limited amount of tree seedlings, will be available on a first-come basis to anyone who wants them after 11:30 a.m.

Vermicomposting

Red wrigglers will be the stars at the vermicomposting table. The NIEHS-bred worms will be available for people to begin their own vermicomposting operation, or for fishing bait. The table will also have potting soil enriched with worm castings (as fertilizer) that can be used to repot plant cuttings or to start seeds. Handouts on home composting will also be available.

Gardening Information

A representative of the Durham County Agricultural Extension Office will be available to provide information on the best plants for the local soils and climate. Soil sample boxes will also be available for people to send in soil samples from home lawns and gardens for free testing to determine soil composition.

Recycling/Waste Management

The second annual RTP Electronics Recycle Day will be May 4 from 7 a.m. until 6 p.m. in the old EPA parking lot at 86 T.W. Alexander Drive.

Items that can be dropped off: computer systems (up to three per person), VCRs, cell phones, TVs up to 27 inches (but not consoles); mercury thermometers and thermostats, stereo and audio equipment, desktop copiers and fax machines.

Items that will not be accepted: speakers larger than 18 inches per side, TVs larger than 27 inches; smoke detectors, appliances, office furniture, commercial and non-residential equipment and other household hazardous waste.

Transportation Alternatives

Besides the usual slew of information on alternatives to each person driving his or her car to work each day, this booth will have information on biodiesel, including a sample made from NIEHS cafeteria grease waste. Find out about the NIEHS transhare program, local bus schedules and vanpool and carpool information.

Old Cell Phone Collection

Got a cell phone you are no longer using? Put it to good use by donating it at the NIEHS Health & Safety Branch collection bin. The phones will be reprogrammed to access emergency services and distributed to victims of domestic violence.

Got Photos? Earth Day Photography Contest Now Open

April 15 is the deadline to submit photographs for the Earth Day photo contest at NIEHS. The contest is open to all NIEHS employees, retirees and family members of employees and retirees. At least one entry from every photographer will be displayed. The display will be up in the E mall area during the NIEHS Earth Day celebration and will remain on display for several weeks. Winners will be chosen by NIEHS staffers via web-based ballots. More details will be released by e-mail.

The guidelines for the contest are:

- Prints must be mounted on firm material. Matting is optional, but entries cannot be framed behind glass.
- You may enter up to four photographs.
- Family shots and portraits are not appropriate for this contest.
- Write your name, mail drop, subject category and photograph name on the back of the entry.
- Category selections are water, sky, flora, fauna, and people in the environment. Determine which element dominates the photo to select the category. The organizing committee reserves the right to move entries into other categories as they deem appropriate.
- Deliver entries to Dick Sloane, MD 102-02, building 102, room 156B; Colleen Anna, MD E4-09, room D460; Jesse DeGraff, mail drop C0-01, room E006; or Gloria Jahnke, MD EC-32, East Campus room 104.

Ellerbe Creek Cleanup

NIEHS volunteers will team up with the Friends of South Ellerbe Creek, members of the Walltown Community Association and the City of Durham for the annual creek cleanup **April 23** from 9-11 a.m. Volunteers will meet at Walltown Park at West Club and Onslow, near Northgate Mall. For more information, contact John Schelp at 541-5723.

Up and Coming

- “What is...Cued Speech?” will be presented by Dianne Green, president, DTG Services, in the Rodbell Auditorium **April 6** from 11 a.m. until noon. The presentation will focus on the spoken language through vision for people who are deaf and hard of hearing.
- Roger J. Davis, the H. Arthur Smith Chair of Cancer Research at the Howard Hughes Medical Institute of the University of Massachusetts Medical School in Boston will deliver the Rodbell Lecture **April 12**. The lecture, “Signal Transduction by Stress-Activated Map Kinases,” will begin at 2 p.m. in the Rodbell Auditorium.
- The NIEHS career counselor will be at the Work Life Center **April 12** and **April 26** for confidential career consultations. To schedule an appointment, contact the NIH Work Life Center at (391) 435-1619. It is a free service for NIEHS employees.
- The NIH ombudsman, Kevin Jessar, will be at NIEHS **April 26-28**. His assistance is available to all NIH staff. To schedule an appointment, contact Jessar at (301) 594-9550. For more information, visit <http://www4.od.nih.gov/ccr/>.