



NIEHS Spotlight

- [2004 Awards Ceremony Spotlights Accomplishments](#)
- [Bill Suk Joins Collegium Ramazzini](#)
- [Heping Cao Honored in China](#)
- [NIEHS Holiday Celebration and International Day 2004](#)



Science Notebook

- [NIEHS-Funded Study Links Lead Exposure with Increased Risk of Cataracts](#)



After Hours

- [Holiday Giving: DRCPT in the Community](#)
- [Mike Shelby, AKA Country Boy](#)



Did You Know?

- [Debra Goodnight Retires](#)
- [News Faces](#)
- [CFC: Average Contribution Up](#)
- [Up and Coming](#)
- [Battery Recycling](#)
- [Blood Drive Results](#)



NIEHS Spotlight

2004 Awards Ceremony Spotlights Accomplishments

The annual NIEHS Awards Ceremony Dec. 14 gave NIEHS officials the opportunity to recognize their outstanding staff members, but also gave outgoing Director Ken Olden a final opportunity to say farewell to the group he lead for 13 years.

Olden, who will step down as director in April, said it was the “last time I will get to say thank you” to “a fantastic group of people.” He will remain at NIEHS, but will return to research. “You are the most dedicated public servants I know. I hope you will continue to be the best public servants for many years to come,” Olden said.



From left: Scientific Director Lutz Birnbaumer, DRCPT Director Allen Dearry, DERT Director Anne Sassaman, Associate Director for Management Rich Freed, Deputy Director Sam Wilson and Director Ken Olden.

NIH Merit Awards

- Sam Wilson, deputy director, “For outstanding dedication to NIEHS’NTP for the past eight years and providing invaluable advice and intellectual leadership to the NIEHS, NIH, and the Nation.”
- Jeannie Bell-Nichols, program support assistant, Health and Safety Branch, “For exemplary and inspirational service to the NIEHS Diversity Program and advocacy for the accessibility and safety of individuals with disabilities.”
- Donna Byrd, information technology specialist, Computer Technology Branch, “For creativity, innovation, and resourcefulness in integrating NED and People and developing software to merge NIEHS into the NIH Active Directory.”
- Jeff Sensenig, retired information technology specialist, Computer Technology Branch, “In recognition of service as the DBA for Oracle as the NIEHS DBMS, establishing DBA principles and practices, and being instrumental in incorporating technology innovations.”
- Robert Hoppin, retired information technology specialist, Computer Technology Branch, “In appreciation of outstanding completion of a number of difficult tasks at NIEHS including the Disease Reporting System, Y2K, CSP oversight and other application development.”
- Carl Ahlmark, utility system repair operator, Facilities Operations Branch, “For continuous highly-motivated and extraordinarily hard-working efforts in providing facility maintenance services.”
- Irish Cox, office automation assistant, Facilities Operations Branch, an “Intense, eager worker who takes tremendous personal pride in providing meticulous administrative services to the NIEHS facilities staff.”
- Bob Roe, electronic industrial control mechanic, Facilities Operations Branch, “For repeatedly stepping up and tackling facility operations problems including taking the lead in providing technical support in the upgrading of the building automation systems.”
- Dick Sloane, resource recovery specialist, Facilities Engineering Branch, “For tireless efforts on behalf of, and the recognition received by, the NIEHS in promoting the Institute’s tremendously successful employee commute trip reduction program.”
- Christine Bruske, director of the Office of Communications and Public Liaison, “For exemplary leadership in promoting NIEHS communications and strengthening the Office of Communications and Public Liaison.”
- Hui Hu, international editor, Environmental Health Perspectives Branch, “For outstanding service in developing and managing all phases of production of *Environmental Health Perspectives*’ International editions and sections.”
- Michelle Owens, extramural program specialist, “For exceptional support and leadership in the Office of the Director during the transition of support staff to the new Division of Extramural Support Activities.”
- Linda Smith, conference and outreach program coordinator for OSD, “For exemplary work in a support of the NIEHS Board of Scientific Counselors and the review process in the Division of Intramural Research.”
- NIEHS Policy Issues Related to Global Health (OD) - Pam Evans, Lisa Archer, Fred Tyson, Linda Bass, Allen Dearry, Mary Gant, and Bill Jirles, “For advancing the leadership role of NIEHS in addressing research and policy issues related to global environmental health.”
- NIH Roadmap Team (OD) – Mike Waters, Carol Shreffler, David Balshaw, Brenda Weis, Sheila Newton, Bill Suk, Trevor Archer, Perry Blackshear, Allen Dearry and Kim Gray, “For providing exceptional direction in guiding development and implementation of the NIH Roadmap to accelerate the pace of biomedical research and discovery.”
- Acquisitions Management Branch – Valarie Sims, Elaine Schoaf, Antoinette Bridges, Tanya Shields, Betty Wilkins, James Bryant Jr., Dee Lunney, Beverly Hall, and James Patterson, “In recognition and appreciation of sustained work performance in support of the NIH mission.”

- NIEHS Science Education Committee – Bill Jirles, Susan Booker, Darlene Dixon, Charle League, Dick Sloane, Liam O’Fallon, Marian Johnson-Thompson, Mike Humble, Kimberly Thigpen Tart, Stephanie Holmgren, Sharon Beard, Debra Goodnight, Jackie Locklear, Gerard Roman, John Peterson, Marcia Soward, and Lou Rozier, “For developing a trans-NIEHS science education committee that effectively coordinates and implements local and national environmental health science educational efforts.”
- Environmental Health Perspectives Branch – Susan Booker, Erin Dooley and Kimberly Thigpen Tart, “For continuously developing and expanding credible, balanced, and timely news coverage for NIEHS journal, *Environmental Health Perspectives*.”
- Education and Obesity Leadership Initiative – Shobha Srinivasen, David Brown, Charle League, Allen Dearry, Angie Sanders and Kevin Wheeler, “For exemplary leadership in designing and implementing a multipronged environmental health research and education program to combat obesity.”
- Superfund Applications Review – Janice Allen, Sally Eckert-Tilotta, and Jackie Malone “For the expert management/coordination of the scientific peer-review of the FY 2004 applications submitted for the National Superfund Basic Research Program (SBRP).”
- Breast Cancer and the Environment Research Centers – Janice Allen, Les Reinlib, Gwen Collman, Anne Sassaman, Elizabeth Maull and Lerlita Garcia, “For expertly joining researchers and advocates to create an innovative research program to study the impact of early life exposures on future breast cancer risk.”
- Programs Analysis Branch – Jerry Phelps and Martha Barnes, “For communicating activities managed by the Division of Extramural Research and Training and the dissemination of science conducted by the extramural portfolio of grantees.”
- External Advisory Group for Superfund Basic Research Program – Kathy Ahlmark, Beth Anderson, Bill Suk and Claudia Thompson, “For exemplary leadership in the initiation, establishment, and management of the External Advisory Group to evaluate and determine impact of the Superfund Basic Research Program.”
- Quality Assurance Laboratory – Jackie Locklear, Gordon Caviness, Tanya Whiteside, Julius Thigpen and Hannah Saunders, “For exemplary work in the early detection and control of mouse parvovirus infection in the animal colonies which prevented costly delays to research projects.”
- Dioxin-like Chemicals / Toxic Equivalence Factors Group – James Hailey, Charles Alden, Abraham Nyska, Tom Burka, Michael Wyde, Nigel Walker, Denise Orzech, Cynthia Smith, Brad Collins and Joe Haseman (retired), “For highly significant scientific and technical contributions to the analysis and reporting of the NTP ‘dioxin-like chemicals’ initiative.”

NIH Director’s Award

Traci Hall, investigator in the Laboratory of Structural Biology, “In recognition of research resulting in a better understanding of RNA silencing and its suppression.”

NIEHS Peer Recognition Awards

- Stephanie Holmgren, “For going beyond the call of duty and showing initiative in providing outstanding information services to NIEHS staff and to the public”
- Laura DeGraff, “In recognition of outstanding service to both people and animals at NIEHS.”

NIEHS Unsung Hero Awards

- Donna Fisher, “For outstanding dedication in a commendable proactive approach, demonstrating commitment when assisting employees with their benefits”
- Susan Fuller, “For valuable contributions made to NIEHS scientists by providing hard-to-find journal articles and books over the years of interlibrary loan service”

2004 - 30 Years of Service

- Beth Anderson
- Deloris Anderson
- Geraldine Carver
- Dwight Dolby
- June Dunnick
- William Eastin
- Janet Guthrie
- Thomas Hardee
- Eric Haskins
- Christopher Hunt
- Shirley Isenhour
- Terri Lewis
- Betty Mills
- Mary Myers
- Dav Robertson
- Anne Sassaman
- Janice Strother
- Ramsey Walden

F.A.R.E. Awards

- Michele Block
- Marueen Bunger
- Michelle Carey
- Sherine Chan
- Miguel Garcia-Diaz
- Anike Hartz
- Kenichi Imahashi
- Nina Storey
- Junhui Sun
- Sung-Jen Wei
- Sarah Kennett
- Rebecca Klein
- Guorong Li
- Nick Lu
- Negin Martin
- Zhong Pei
- John Seubert

Bill Suk Joins Collegium Ramazzini



Bill Suk, the director of DERT's Center for Risk and Integrated Sciences, is now among the ranks of the prestigious Collegium Ramazzini.

The Collegium Ramazzini is an independent, international academy made up of experts in environmental and occupational health from more than 30 countries. The group examines critical scientific issues in occupational and environmental medicine worldwide and periodically issues statements on topics with potentially high impact on public health. The group is governed by 180 elected fellows. Suk is among the newest members.

The Collegium Ramazzini transmits its views to policy-making bodies, authorities, agencies and the public. By holding conferences and symposia, publishing research papers, and publicizing its views, the Collegium seeks to help legislators, regulators and other decision-makers to better understand the public policy implications of scientific findings.

The Collegium is named after Italian physician and philosopher Bernardino Ramazzini, who practiced and taught medicine in the late 1600s. The non-profit organization is neither associated with nor supported by any single government body or interest group, according to its web site.

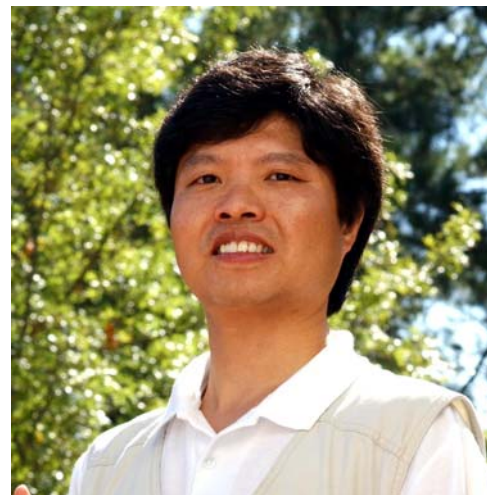
Other NIEHS members include Walter Rogan and James Huff.

Heping Cao Honored in China

NIEHS's own Heping Cao was honored with the Young Investigator Award by the Human Proteomics Organization during its third World Congress Oct 25-27 in Beijing.

Cao presented two posters at the meeting: "Identification of Phosphorylation Sites in Human Tristetraprolin by Mass Spectrometry and Site-Directed Mutagenesis" (Heping Cao, Leesa J. Deterding, John Venable, Elizabeth A. Kennington, Timothy A. J. Haystead, John R. Yates III, Kenneth B. Tomer, and Perry J. Blackshear); and "Expression, Purification, and Biochemical Characterization of the Anti-inflammatory Tristetraprolin: A Zinc-dependent mRNA Binding Protein Affected by Posttranslational Modifications" (Heping Cao).

Cao, during the same trip to China, gave six seminars on his work at NIEHS for researchers at various Chinese institutions, including the Institute of Genetics and Developmental Biology of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, the College of Bioscience and Biotechnology at Beijing Forestry University, Department of Biotechnology at Beijing Union University, College of Crop Sciences at Jiangxi Agricultural University in Nanchang, College of Life Sciences at Jiangxi Normal University in Nanchang, and Key Laboratory for Animal Biotechnology of Jiangxi Province and the Ministry of Agriculture of China in Nanchang.



NIEHS Holiday Celebration and International Day 2004



International culinary delights are the customary fare at the annual International Day, and 2004 was no exception. The event is sponsored each year by the NIEHS Diversity Council and the Office of Management. (More photos on the next page.)

More Festivities



Left: Julia Rozenfeld, standing, manned the display on Israel, while Sheetal Trivedi told people about life in India.

Below: Maria Kadiiska displays colorful Bulgarian wares. International Day is an annual event designed to increase awareness of other cultures. It always follows the annual Awards Ceremony.



Above: Phil Hanson might not have volunteered to sing karaoke had he known what the DJ had in mind, but he was a good sport anyway, belting out "Walking in Women's Underwear" to the tune of "Walking in a Winter Wonderland." Hanson got the crowd going, though, and before long Irish Cox, Diane Crawford, Cynthia Radford and April Lane took center stage.





Science Notebook

NIEHS-Funded Study Links Lead Exposure with Increased Risk of Cataracts

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health and Brigham and Women's Hospital concluded that lifetime lead exposure may increase the risk of developing cataracts.

The nine-year study, which NIEHS funded, looked at lead levels in the tibia, the larger of two leg bones below the knee, and in the kneecaps of men in the Boston area. Men with high lead levels in the tibia had a two and a half times greater risk of developing cataract, the leading cause of blindness and visual impairment, the study found.

Blood lead levels reflect recent exposures, while bone levels reflect long-term exposure, researchers said.

“Given the strong association between tibia lead and cataract in men, we estimate that lead exposure plays a significant role in approximately 42 percent of all cataracts in this population,” said Debra Schaumberg, assistant professor of medicine and ophthalmology at Harvard and lead author of the study. She said cataracts develop as a result of cumulative injury to the crystalline lens of the eye. As lead enters the lens, it gradually injures certain proteins in the epithelial cells, eventually forming a cataract.

Harvard researchers are among the first to use bone lead in studying the effect of lifetime lead exposure on disease risk. The study results appeared in the Dec. 8 issue of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. The study also looks at the effects of lead on hypertension, kidney impairment and cognitive functioning.



After Hours

Holiday Giving: DRCPT in the Community

Member of the Division of Research Coordination, Planning, and Translation did their part to give back to the community during the holiday season by helping out at the Durham Rescue Mission on Dec. 23. DRCPT staffers were among the group of volunteers handing out toys to needy children.

The Durham Rescue Mission hosts several events each year for needy families. DRCPT Director Allen Dearry introduced the idea earlier this year. DRCPT also worked during a similar event at Easter.

Needy families who came to the Mission received gifts for each child, donated clothing, a food basket and a hot meal. DRCPT staffers at the toy distribution center helped distribute two truck loads of donated toys.

The event was covered in the local media, including Durham's *Herald-Sun*, WB22 TV, and WRAL TV. More than 1700 people received assistance, with help from 429 volunteers.



Charle League, above, coordinator for the Summers of Discovery Program, gives Santa Claus some help by opening plastic bags to hold toys chosen by wide-eyed children, who might otherwise not have much of a Christmas. DRCPT staffers volunteered their time to help at the Durham Rescue Mission's Christmas giveaway Dec. 23.

Angie Sanders, the DRCPT secretary, checks out a toy for a young girl. Meanwhile, Bill Jirles, in the background, keeps the supply of toys flowing from the supply trucks to the front of the lines, where children "shopped" for their gifts.

Mike Shelby, AKA Country Boy

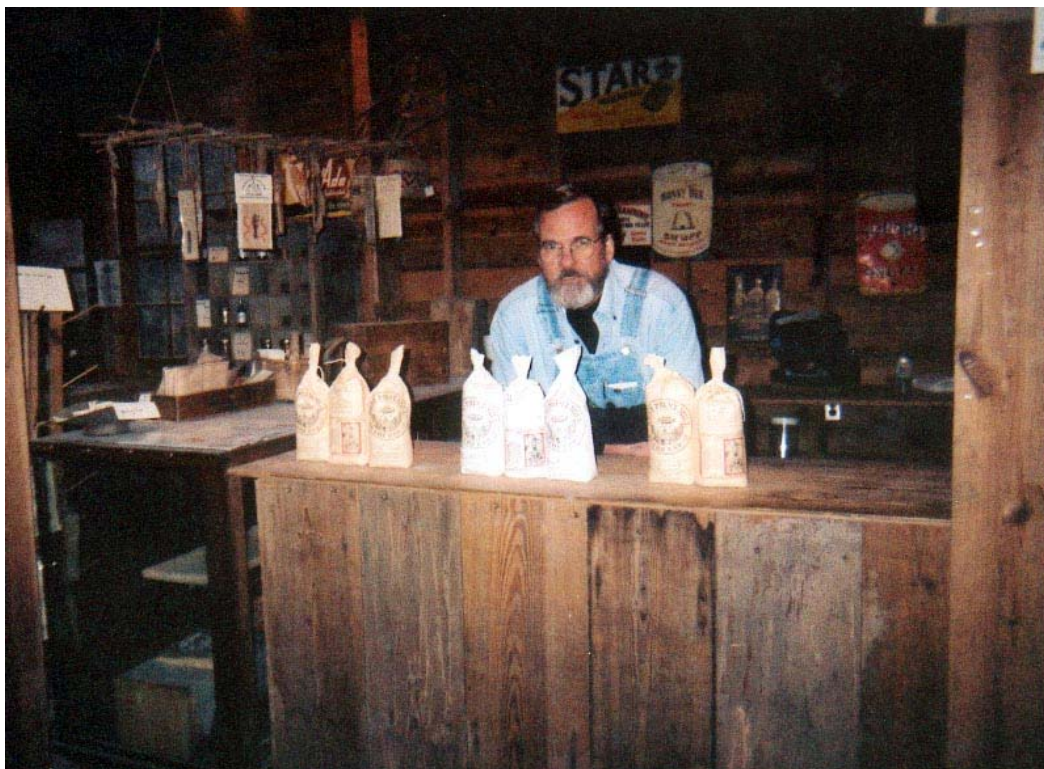
John Denver famously crooned: “Thank God, I’m a country boy.” You could almost hear Mike Shelby’s agreement.

Shelby leans on a wooden counter in the country store part of the grist mill at West Point on the Eno in Durham. He eyes a few bags of freshly ground cornmeal. Sunlight squeezes through the cracks between the roughly hewn wooden wall planks to partially illuminate the dusty, bare floor. By December, it is bitter cold here. Unless, that is, you are near the cast-iron stove, which is the sole source of heat.

Shelby, in his well-worn coveralls, is clearly at ease in this primitive, rustic environment. He and a select few others operate the mill, turning out organic whole wheat flour and grits in addition to white and yellow corn meal.

Right: Mike Shelby, director of the NIEHS Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction, in the grist mill at West Point on the Eno park in Durham.

Below: Kent McCoury, is the assistant site manager at Bennett Place, a state historic site in Durham, but, he, too works at the mill in his spare time. McCoury’s family operated mills for generations. He holds a cornshuck broom displayed at the mill.



Since 1998, when Shelby happened upon the grist mill at West Point by the Eno in Durham, he has been volunteering, regularly spending weekend time here.

There is undoubtedly an element of contrast between Mike Shelby, Ph.D., director of the Center for the Evaluation of Risks to Human Reproduction, and Mike Shelby, the Oklahoma farm boy who can’t stay away from rustic old mill.

Shelby admits to a long-time fascination with grist mills, which turn grains into products like flour, cornmeal and grits. “I also regularly use the products,” he said.

Shelby grew up in rural Oklahoma, but spent quite a bit of time in east Tennessee. There, he began visiting grist mills. A friend in graduate school had a grist mill, and Shelby got his first chance to grind grain.



NIEHS's Mike Shelby and Beth Highley, park manager for West Point on the Eno, try to stay warm in frigid December temperatures in the grist mill. Behind them are some of the grinding stones used at the mill. The stones weight more than 2,000 pounds each. The fresh cornmeal, grits and organic whole wheat flour produced and sold at the mill have resulted in a loyal clientele more than willing to make the trip to North Durham to get them. The original mill was destroyed in a flood in 1942, but was rebuilt and later opened to the public as part of Durham's West Point on the Eno park.



The mill operates on weekends from late March through mid December, producing whole wheat flour, white and yellow cornmeal and grits, which are sold on-site. Shelby and several other volunteers, all similarly clad in faded denim and flannel, maintain the equipment.

The original mill on the site dates back to 1778, and operated continually until 1942. It was one of more than 30 such mills on the Eno River. West Point was a village on the river long before Durham existed, Shelby said. In 1942, the river flooded, destroying the dam and the building. The land was sold to a development company, but a group of citizens formed to acquire the land. In 1973, the City of Durham obtained the land that forms the basis of West Point on the Eno. The mill building that exists today was constructed, and in 1978, it opened to the public.

The mill runner, or top stone, generally weights more than 2,000 pounds. The grains are crushed between the two huge stones rigged with belts, gears, and a water wheel to harness the energy from the water running in the river. "Mike innately knows this stuff. He understands the mechanics of it," said Beth Highley, park manager. "He just really likes mills."

Antiques – genuine artifacts representing North Carolina culture – are displayed throughout the mill. On one wall is a bootleg whiskey still. Another wall displays a corn cob crusher, which popped the kernels off the cob, and nearby is a cornshuck broom.

"Maybe its nostalgia – I don't know," Shelby says in an attempt to explain his fascination with mills. "I get satisfaction from knowing hot to operate a grist mill – knowing how to do something the old-fashioned way rather than the new-fashioned way," he said.

West Point on the Eno is located on North Roxboro Road, north of I-85. For more information, go to: http://www.durham-nc.com/planners/group_tours/west_eno.php.



Did You Know?

Debra Goodnight Retires

Debra Goodnight, still known by many as Debra Parrish, lead NIEHS into the computer age way back when.

As word processors replaced typewriters, Goodnight was there to reassure the skittish, and for the skeptics, to demonstrate the usefulness of then-emerging technology.

Goodnight clearly recalls the early days of computers - big ol' IBM 1401s, with neither operating systems nor hard drives, and six big reels of tape.

Programming entailed stacks of cards.

“I stand before you an antique computer,”

Goodnight, said to the well-wishers at her retirement party. She has given 34 years to federal service. As she looked back over those years, Goodnight said it has always been a challenge, but a rewarding one that created friendships and memories.

“My work here made me feel that I was a part of something important,” Goodnight said.



Debra Goodnight revels in memories of NIEHS as well as the scent of the yellow roses, which were one of the farewell gifts offered. Goodnight retires this month after 34 years of federal service.

News Faces

Yin Li



Yin Li is a biologist in the Laboratory of Reproductive and Developmental Toxicology. She came to NIEHS from Columbia Medical Center, where she was an associate research scientist in the Department of Otolaryngology/Pathology and manager of the Drug Discovery Research office.

Li was a post doc at the Burnham Institute of La Jolla Cancer Research Center from 1993-1998. She earned her doctorate in pharmaceutical sciences in 1993 from the University of Tokyo, and her master's, also in pharmaceutical sciences, in 1989 from the Kitasato University in Japan and the Shenyang Pharmacy University in China. She speaks Chinese and Japanese as well as English.

CFC: Average Contribution Up

NIEHS concluded its 2004 Combined Federal Campaign with 250 contributors and a total of \$83,929. The amount collected is higher than all but two previous campaigns. Officials said the average contribution came in at \$335, which is the highest average contribution ever for NIEHS.

“I am encouraged that in the face of recent staff reductions and economic conditions that affect this area, the NIEHS community remains a strong supporter of the Combined Federal Campaign,” said NIEHS Director Ken Olden, in his all-hands e-mail.

NIEHS's CFC Chair Don Gula attributes the success of this year's campaign to the key workers, who distributed information within their assigned groups and collected completed forms.

Up and Coming

The NIH Work/Life Center will videocast a series of sessions that can be viewed at NIEHS by going to <http://videocast.nih.gov>. “Help! I have to give a Presentation!!” will be videocast **Jan. 5** from noon until 2 p.m. “Improving Your Skills as an Interviewee” will be videocast **Jan. 19** from noon until 2 p.m.

Battery Recycling

The NIEHS battery recycling program expanded to include collection points in Building 101's glassware area, Building 102's break room, Building 105, room P105, Nottingham Hall's break room, and the East Campus' first floor break room.

Blue bins are for alkaline (AAA, AA, C, D, 9V, Lantern), carbon/zinc, and silver oxide button batteries. Cardboard boxes are for nickel-cadmium, lithium-ion, and nickel metal hydride batteries. All batteries must be sealed in plastic bags, then put in the collection bins or boxes.

The Health and Safety Branch asks people not to throw batteries away. Contact HSB to report leaking or damaged batteries. Lead-acid, alkaline, carbon/zinc, or button batteries from home should not be brought to work for recycling.

Blood Drive Results

The December Blood Drive at NIEHS generated 48 usable units of blood, and one new donor.